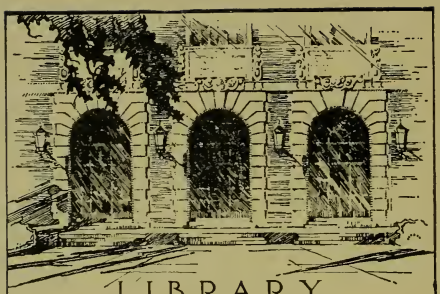
Treason Felony

By

John

Hill



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TREASON-FELONY

A Novel

BY

JOHN HILL

AUTHOR OF

'SALLY,' 'THE CORSARS,' 'AN UNFORTUNATE ARRANGEMENT,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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London

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TREASON-FELONY

CHAPTER V.

JOAN'S GROVE.

J. R. Shaw, M.A., and Miss Elizabeth Long were standing after dinner on the lawn near the house, and on that side of it which commanded the westward outlook. Below them lay the valley, with its river hidden by darkening woods, its grass-fields growing gray and yellow corn growing white as the daylight dwindled, and the dark edge of the world rolled up and hid the last long flattened arc of dull fire which had been

the noonday blaze no eye could bear a few short hours ago.

'Seems a fair evening,' observed Shaw.

'I thought they said you were very clever?' replied Bessie Long, looking to her front in an apparently abstracted way, and rolling a leaf of a lemon verbena about with her fingers.

'I don't know who spreads these libels about; but why?'

'Well, I didn't expect you to tell me what the weather was like.'

'A man must be allowed a mild platitude occasionally. It's dreadful to be expected to be continuously intellectual, or deliberately funny, and it's sure to lead to disappointment. That's the worst of being with somebody else. Now, if I had been alone, I should never have thought of observ-

ing that it was a lovely day, or other hopeless proclamations of the obvious.'

'Thank you.'

And she moved away. Shaw, following immediately after, said:

'There, now you're vexed, as the lady in Marryat's story used to say.'

Bessie stopped for him to come up, and said:

'Well, it's only fair. I began by being rude to you.'

'You did, and I hope you will go on when the fancy seizes you. You will probably gather in time that I myself am constructed in that style. In any case, I had much rather you said what you really thought than made up nice civil proper replies. You've raised yourself several places already above the kind of young lady who would

reply to my very stupid observation, "Oh, lovely, isn't it?" and then gush about pictures.'

'I don't see many pictures.'

'But you see the original beauty of the earth and sky and sea, which is worth a wilderness of pictures. And you don't want to talk Grosvenor Gallery or realism about it, which is a jubilee.'

'Did you think I would?'

'I was prepared, if need were, to call things distinctly convincing and quite charming and very sweet, or merely pretty and too tuney. But I didn't really expect it. Personally, I like things to be merely pretty, and think they can't be tuney enough. My friend Long, your brother, has softly and suddenly vanished away, I observe.'

'So he has. He's taken to mooning around by himself lately.'

'Oh?'

'It's curious, isn't it?'

'Have you any idea why?'

'It frequently happens in tropical climes, when a vessel gets, so to speak, "snarked." At least, I should imagine so.'

'Quite so. But does it occur to you at all what the vessel's got snarked on?'

'I think he has steered to starboard when he ought to keep his head larboard——'

'And so done something rather like running on a rock?'

'Exactly. You seem to know something about it, too.'

'I know that rock. It's a mud-bank.'

'Here, I don't like this allegory—it's getting involved.'

'Very well. Let's play at something else.'

After a pause, she said:

'I want to ask you something.'

'Ask away. Ask two. I know a good many.'

'I dare say you'll think it's no business of mine.'

'If I think that I'll manage to indicate it. Well?'

'Do you know the Vanes?'

'Yes, I do. I made a sort of scratch acquaintance with them in Paris, where I happened to go and stay at the same hotel.'

'What do you think of them?'

'Well, do you know I wanted to talk to you about that. What strikes me is—I say, couldn't we sit down? There's that delightful old tree with the seat round it very close.'

'You are a lazy thing!'

'I know. I've admitted that already. I say, it won't give you cold or anything, will it?'

'Not on an evening like this,' replied Bessie, sitting down as requested.

'Well, what I was going to say is this. It seems to me there is something funny about these people. In the first place, nobody knows anything about them. That's no harm, taken by itself. But they are received here by your father, for example, and other gentry, probably, who follow his lead, partly as neighbours perhaps, but largely as strong Conservatives and Primrose Leaguers, and all that sort of thing. That's so, I gather from conversation on local politics at dinner.'

'Yes. That's quite true.'

'Well, now, they are Irish—at least, he is. No harm in that, either, taken by itself. I'm an Irishman myself, but of the Ulster (or Ultra) Loyalist persuasion, and it takes a thief to catch a thief, don't you know. And I happen to know that Vane

in Paris was very different from what Vane here seems to be. He consorted with all kinds of exiled ruffians, the sort of people who use the Irish-American bar, and others, and his and their opinions were a more or less bloodthirsty mixture of Fenianism and whisky. By the way, I think, for the present, at any rate, we would do well not to mention these odd little facts—see?'

'Yes. I shan't say anything.'

'I didn't think you would. I tell you these things just as I would to a man whom I trusted.'

'Thank you.'

'And I think your brother is at present a trifle inclined to be biased on the question—it nearly approaches the snag he is snarked on. I gave him a gentle hint about *that* this afternoon which made him rather sad. I fancy he is gone to work it out to several places of decimals now. The female

Vane—or Vain female—is a very trumpery little exotic; but H. Long is of an age when a new impression easily effaces the last one. I think it will all fizzle out.'

'It's very, *very* silly, to say the least of it.'

'Ay, and the most of it's not more. Then there's another point. This afternoon, down on the shore, or rather on the sea, I learnt that the yacht—Vane's yacht—had come over, apparently from France, with one or two passengers, guests of Vane. Now I know the sort of Johnnies that would come from France and be friends of Vane, and they are what in American would be called a pretty tough crowd. Furthermore, there came in my train to-day another guest for Mr. Vane—a kind of shady Odysseus of Scotch extraction, of a warlike persuasion, a singularly incongruous person for a pretty, lazy little watering-place where people

bathe, and paddle, and catch lobsters. And I want to know what they're playing at, and what it's all about.'

'It does seem a little odd, now you mention all those things.'

'A little plotsome—eh? And getsome. Excuse a momentary lapse into imbecility. It's the heat.'

'Is it over now?'

'Yes. My reason has become rigid again for the present. You see, if the coming elections go in favour of the Union, there is no knowing what won't happen next. Still more, if they don't. You've no idea here in the quiet English country what strong hatreds, what wide-spread, far-reaching organizations, and what desperate persons, you have working against you. You're like people reposing in proud security in a strong fortress;

but if your sentries in the silent night-watches despise or neglect the faint tapping of a pickaxe far below, and put it down to crickets or woodpeckers or something, there will be a big bang some day, and your fortress will have a breach in it which will take some trouble to defend, and more to repair. Catch on?'

'This is interesting. Go on. I catch on.'

'Do you know that the crew of the yacht are all Irish?'

'No. I don't know much about the yacht.'

'Do you know at all what servants they keep?'

'I know this, that no girl about here would go as a servant at that house, because the gentleman who used to live there a few years ago hung himself. They've got a man, a gipsy, poaching kind of man. I don't know what he's supposed to do for them. He opened the door when we called

and left cards, and looked like something between a groom and a soldier. He doesn't belong to these parts either; but he's got a mother, an awful old witch, and a daughter, a rather good-looking, untidy, trapesing girl, who have lately come to live in a cottage at Redmore—that's that village you passed through on the way from Shervil Station.'

'Down a steep hill? Jolly village it is, too. The life of the sixteenth century, hardly moved by the tide of the ages, unconscious of the clamour and coil and change of things, save when an enterprising delegate of something or other comes on a tricycle and worries them, and tells them how unhappy they are, and how they are "exploited" by the parson and squire. And there's a nice gray old church, begun Norman, I should say, continued Gothic, improved Perpendicular, windows smashed and interior whitewashed Puritan, and, I suppose,

gallery removed and pews knocked down Recent. Vicar "earnest," services "bright," and all the rest, no doubt. Also a diseased-looking white brick conventicle with a slate roof, ornamented with a large date over the door, and a blue-paper list of persons entitled to vote, or carry guns, or something. But that stands alone, along the road. It doesn't mar the antique integrity of the village.'

'That's Redmore. And this old Mrs. Lee and her grand-daughter live there. It's very picturesque and perfectly filthy, and they seem happy.'

'Sure they're not Irish? Lee is a gipsy name. Well, I must see if I can't worry out a little more information. I think it's good enough, don't you?'

'I think it's very exciting. What do you mean to do?'

Here Lady Long arrived, and said:

'Are you sure you're warm enough, dear, sitting still? Hadn't you better run in and get one of the old shawls?'

'I'm not at all chilly, mother. But I'll walk about instead of sitting, if you like. Mr. Shaw is rested now, I dare say,' she added dryly.

'Mr. Shaw, wouldn't you like something extra to put on? There are several of Sir William's capes in the back lobby; Bessie could run in for it in a minute. I'm sure you look rather delicate, Mr. Shaw, and your mother wouldn't like to see you sit about in the night-air without even a scarf round your neck, I think.'

'You're very kind indeed, Lady Long, and you're quite right about what my mother would say or think. I'll walk about instead of sitting. But I don't feel at all cold, thanks.' (The temperature was of the kind popularly called sweltering.)

'Well, I shall just go round the garden once more, and then I think I shall go in. And mind you don't stay out too long, Bessie. These warm nights are very treacherous.'

'No, mother.'

'Where's Harry?'

'Oh, he's about here somewhere!'

'I do wish your father would come in and read his paper quietly'—as if Sir William were given to reading it in a tumultuous or rowdy manner—'I'm sure he overdoes himself walking about all day and all night like this. It's so easy to get a chill when you're tired.'

'It's only a little after nine, mother dear, and you know he's always punctually in by half-past.'

And Lady Long toddled slowly away, in undecided directions. She liked to be anxious, to

worry herself, and to give directions; but it did not seem to cause her any particular disappointment or surprise when nobody paid the least attention to them beyond civil verbal evasion or acquiescence.

'*Are* you delicate, Mr. Shaw?' asked Bessie.

'It's a matter of opinion. My mother is firmly persuaded that I am what she calls "not at all strong." My father used to entertain (and express) the opinion that I was a wiry little ape that could stand anything, including a licking. All I can say is that I have no recollection of ever having an illness in my life, that I have an excellent appetite, and can pull myself up by one arm on a horizontal bar. Candidly, I don't feel that I stand in immediate need of a tonic, or a perforated chest-protector.'

'You have lost your father?'

'Yes. Some years ago.'

'That must make a dreadful difference in a family—one doesn't realize that one's own people must grow old and die. It seems almost impossible to think things are not always to go on just as they are, somehow.'

'It does; but they don't always go on. And there comes a time when the world seems wrenched asunder, and a great void is made; but it gets partly filled up in time in new ways, though never the same. It is a desolate thing to see your mother sitting in a widow's cap for the first time, and to look at the old hats and coats and walking-sticks that will never be used again, the old ink-stand, the pens, and blotting-paper covered all over with impressions of a writing it will never blot any more——'

'Oh, don't talk like that!'

And they walked silently towards the light that came from the drawing-room windows. At this moment a loud report made itself heard.

'Hullo! what's that?'

'Oh, it startled me so!' said Bessie. 'My nervous system must be in a bad way to-night. It must be the keeper, I suppose. It's in Joan's Grove. Ah, here's Harry! What is it?'

'Oh, I don't know,' said Harry cheerfully. 'One of old Nobbs's patent fireworks, I suppose. Probably set it off himself, out of addleheadedness. No poacher would be such a fool. I'm going in. You'll find me in my den, Shaw, as soon as you like. Sorry I was away so long, but I'd no idea how the time was going.'

And Harry went round to the front door and entered the house.

Shortly after this Pentony Nobbs, the keeper,

appeared running up the path which led from Joan's Grove across some grass, and through a gate in some iron fencing which separated the garden and lawn part of Lowcliff from the agricultural and wooded part. He arrived out of breath, with a gun in his hand—an elderly, short man, with grizzled thin whiskers, and the usual garb of a gamekeeper. Seeing Shaw, he said to him:

'Could I have a word with you, sir?'

'Certainly,' replied Shaw, walking Hobbs to a little distance, and saying to Bessie: 'You had better go in, Miss Long. I'll tell you all about it as soon as I know what there is to tell.'

Bessie remained, however, where she was.

'Now then, my friend,' said Shaw to the keeper.

'I thought I might see Master 'Arry, sir, but as

you was the only gentleman there, I made bold to speak to you. There's bin a haccident in Joan's Grove to master, sir.'

'Come along. Is there any man in the house who could come with a light?'

'I'll go and fetch old Rawlins, sir.'

'Do. I'll wait here. And don't tell anybody anything yet.'

'No fear, sir.'

And Nobbs went towards the back-door. The stables and lodge, where the coachman lived, and a gardener, were at some distance from the house, wherefore Rawlins, though not the most efficient, was the nearest male servant.

'Oh, what is it, Mr. Shaw?' said Bessie.

'There is some sort of trouble in the place you call Joan's Grove. I don't yet understand how, but it seems your father has met with some acci-

dent. I'll tell you that at once, and I'll tell you all about it as soon as I know.'

'Are you going?'

'Yes; as soon as this man has fetched a lantern.'

'I'll go too.'

'No, you won't. You will go and get his bed made ready, like a brave girl, and tell your brother to take a horse and trap and go and fetch the doctor. Will you do this?'

'Yes.'

And she went and executed all her mission coolly, and in short sentences. Then she went to her own room and had hysterics.

The keeper returned with the tremulous old butler carrying a lantern, and armed with a poker he could hardly lift, and they all set off for Joan's Grove as fast as Rawlins could be made to move. On the way Nobbs explained:

'It was this way, sir. I was a-settin' in my 'ouse wi' door open, 'avin' a draw o' my pipe, and I years one o' they springs go off. Spring-guns, you know, sir, with a wire 'crost the path, what sets 'em off, 'bout as 'igh as your waist.'

'I understand.'

'So up I gets and starts off, sticking a couple a cattridges in as I goes, straight for wheer I knowed that 'ere wire was. And there I finds poor old squire down lengthways with the path. It was too dark to tell much. I struck a lucifer or two, or I couldn't 'a seed 'is face. 'E was a bleedin' a bit from the side, but not sa terble much, as fur as I see, so I ties my 'ank'cheef round, and 'is own, best way's I could, and I thinks, Well, year's a bad job! I better go up 'ouse 'squick's I knows 'ow.'

'Quite right. Was there anything in that alarm-gun to hurt anybody?'

'No, sir, no; on'y charge a powder. Sir William and me 'ave often a-wished we could putt something more in for to tickle up they poachers. 'E might a set it off 'isself a fallin', or it might a bin done by someone else as he run away.'

'I heard the thing go off, but I only heard one report.'

'No more didn't I. It's queer. Year, bring that light along, Mr. Rawlins. We be gettin' in th' 'ood now.'

And Pentony Nobbs full-cocked both hammers, for his anger burnt sore within him, and no laws would have protected any casual trespasser who crossed the range of his twin muzzles just then.

They came to the place described, where they found the old squire lying on the mossy grass of a pathway about five feet wide, with tall underwood,

chiefly hazel and young ash and oak, on each side. Sir William's crimson silk handkerchief, and Nobbs's figured yellow and red cotton one, were twisted together, and tied tightly round his chest, so as to close the wound as well as the poor old keeper knew how. Rawlins stood rattling the lantern while tears ran down his foolish old red face. He was in rusty black evening dress, and wore no hat.

Shaw knelt down and examined the figure on the ground. After a minute or so he said:

'Keeper, I'm no doctor, but I'm very much afraid he's dead. I can't feel any pulse or heart-beat, and his hand's awfully cold. And he certainly doesn't seem to breathe. Still, we can't be certain. We must carry him in between us. We can manage that, you and I, and this man can carry the gun and the lantern.'

'Yes, sir. Squire be meddlin' 'eavy,' Nobbs observed, with the materialism of the uncultured, which at such a moment sounded unfeeling, but was not so in the least. 'There be 'is stick, sir, an' 'is 'at, same 'e allus carried.'

Shaw took up the stick and looked at it. There was no sign about it of rough usage, such as it might have displayed if used in self-defence.

'Look here, keeper, will you do this? There's sure to be a fuss made about this to-morrow, and all sorts of gaping idiots will be asking questions, and wanting to see this place. What I want you to do is to stay about here and see that nobody *does* come and see it. Keep them from coming into the wood, or messing the ground about, or picking up anything. We can't tell by this light, but there may be all sorts of marks, footprints and so on, which we will look for in daylight.'

'Yes, sir; I understand you. And you be right. And I'll do it, if I 'as to putt a charge a number two into some of 'em.'

And they carried Sir William home.

A few minutes after seeing him laid on his bed, Shaw was coming downstairs, when he met Bessie in the passage, and she said:

'Well?'

'He is badly hurt, I'm afraid.'

'Oh, Mr. Shaw, he's not dead, is he?'

'Upon my word, I don't know. The doctor will tell us.'

'What is it?'

'It's a crime, I think. It can hardly be an accident. How is Lady Long taking it?'

'I have made her go to her room. She is very much upset, of course, but she will talk so,' added Bessie with a half-hysterical laugh, 'that I had to

leave her for a few minutes, or I should go mad. Oh, Mr. Shaw, what *shall* we do?'

And the poor girl leaned her head on her arm against the wall and cried. Just then Shaw made up his mind that he was going to find out who had brought this thing on an upright and kind-hearted old man, an innocent household, and on this girl he did not know what to say to or how to comfort.

Very soon the wheels of the dog-cart were heard on the gravelled avenue, and Shaw said:

'Now you go to your room, or somewhere, and I'll let you know what the doctor says as soon as possible.'

And he went down to explain matters to Harry and the doctor, and soon the three were walking upstairs. Bessie hovered about alone on the landing, waiting for the opening of the door she had heard shut. The maidservants were

clustering together in terrified groups about the back stairs and passages. Rawlins stood outside his old master's bedroom door, with weak knees and a deplorable face, wishing for once in his life that he were not quite so useless; and Pentony Nobbs sat on a wooden chair gazing into the kitchen fire with eyes of wrath and blank despair, and his gun laid across his knees. Shaw and Harry had left the doctor alone with the patient by request, and gone to wait in the drawing-room, where a lamp was burning, and a few newspapers, *Punch*, some fancy-work, and a library-book lay about, as if nothing at all unusual were occurring.

Shaw was telling Harry the details he knew when Rawlins appeared shading a candle to usher in the doctor, a middle-aged, solid-looking practitioner who had attended the Longs and most of

the neighbourhood for some fifteen years. This gentleman looked at Harry, and said:

'It is all over; he must have died when the wound was given.' Then he added: 'I will call to-morrow morning and give you the necessary certificate, Sir Henry.'

Harry and Shaw both started.

'Now,' added the doctor, 'I will go. Don't you mind about me; I'll find your groom, and he'll take me back to Starmouth. Good-evening.'

And the doctor left, while Harry went upstairs to look at his dead father, and to see his mother and sister, while Shaw stayed alone in the drawing-room, thinking.

And this was the *précis* of his thoughts:

He would leave Lowcliff the following day; that would be only decent and proper.

He would not, however, leave the neighbourhood,

but take a room in one of the Starmouth inns, and stay till he had ascertained every possible fact calculated to throw light on this murder. The thing would probably be difficult, and the local police were probably wooden-headed ignorant countrymen.

In the meantime, he might perhaps once or twice again see this girl, the laughter of whose cornflower - eyes had been so cruelly sorrow-dimmed.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH SHAW COMES TO THE FRONT, BUT KEEPS IN THE BACKGROUND.

Early the next morning, about six o'clock, Shaw got up, dressed, and packed all his things ready for a start. Then he put on his cap—the cloth travelling and lounging cap he had worn the evening before—hung his glasses round his neck, and went quietly downstairs, found his way out by the French window of the drawing-room, where the papers, the fancy-work, and the very positions of the chairs were just as he had left them last night, on to the dew-laden lawn, and made his way towards the wood on the slope of the valley,

which lay under the sunny haze which predicts a still summer day. Skirting round the outside of Joan's Grove, he was not long in detecting by its thin streak of early blue smoke the little stone cottage where Pentony Nobbs abode, and found the old keeper eating bread and bacon and drinking tea, slowly and meditatively, with the door wide open to the beauty of the morning, and his old white-and-tan spaniel sitting on the floor near him.

'Marn', sir. You be come to 'ave a look at copse, I s'pose?'

'Yes; I thought the earlier the better.'

'Right, sir. Will you do me the favour to take a bit of anything, sir? Or would you care to 'ave a cup o' cider 'fore we starts?'

'Thanks; I would like a cup of cider. It's good in this part of the world, I know.'

And Nobbs went into a dark wooden shed, Shaw following, and discovered a cask peeping its round black face from under a truss or two of straw, with a wooden tap in it. From a horizontal beam which acted as a shelf he took a cup, one of those short upright cylindrical mugs which usually have a sprig of pink rose on one side and 'A Present from Brighton' on the other. This he drew full of cider and handed to Shaw, saying:

'You'll find 'e meddlin' fair, sir.'

'Very good, indeed.'

''Ave another, sir? Plenty year.'

'No, thanks; not so early in the day. I've not breakfasted yet.'

Nobbs took his own dose, and they set forth through Joan's Grove, Nobbs of course with his faithful double-barrelled pinfire.

They made a most diligent examination, and

they found nothing. The weather had been dry for some little time, and the ground was quite hard. Any impressions the ground and moss might have received had of course disappeared by this time, owing to the natural elastic recovery of such vegetation, and the dew was equally on everything, even on the 'galvanized' wire which still stretched limply across the park in connection with the exploded spring-gun. They examined its attachment at each end, and came to the conclusion that the thing must have been set off by a hard push or pull in a horizontal direction in the line of the path, and leading towards the uphill-side of the grove. That gave the notion that the person or persons who committed the crime had started running immediately afterwards, and inadvertently come in contact with the wire.

'Now, if he ran that way,' said Shaw, pointing

in the direction the strain on the attachments of the wire indicated, 'where would he get to?'

'Well, sir, the path divides, as you med' a seed. One way leads up towards the 'ouse, way you see me come last night; t'other goes further to the left, and comes out at a gate into a field, which you couldn't see from the 'ouse.'

'Let's go and see that gate and that field.'

It was a common gray wooden five-barred gate, and on the other side was a field of barley. The gate was near a corner of the field, and along the side of the field, which was at right angles to the side in which the gate was, the wood continued some distance. The field sloped up towards that part of the wood, and the rest of the wood was on the same slope, wood and field together being on the side of the valley which has been so often spoken of. The hypothetical route of the fugitive

was therefore so far in a direction slanting upwards across the slope of the valley, with the seashore of Starmouth on his right rear and the house of Lowcliff some distance to his right, and above him.

'That barley 'ave bin trod about a bit,' observed Nobbs. 'Then 'e've got out of it into ditch, and followed 'e, I specs.'

'Where would that take him to?'

'Fust of all into 'nother field, then on Redmore Common.'

'And where would that take him?'

'Well, sooner or later 'e'd get into the road. Common runs part of the way longside road till you gits to carner where signpost is. Don't matter whether 'e knows 'is way or not, 'e couldn't run about that common long without fetching the road.'

'What road?'

'Well, sir, it's like this. The road from Starmouth what comes through Redmore goes some ways 'longside Redmore Common; you med a seed it comin' from station. Then when it comes to signpost, common 'e stops, and one road goes to Shervil to the right, and t'other goes to the left, and gets into the road to Exeter, 'bout three miles on, at Melyton. The road parts like the letter Y, you see, and 'e might a took any a they three.'

'Then, Mr. Nobbs, we're not much forrader.'

'No, sir, we bain't.'

'Well, let's look at it another way. Have you, who know these parts, any idea or suspicion of your own about anybody?'

'There's no man year'bouts I've any right or any wish to name, or put such a thing on. There be

chaps as 'ud poach, and chaps as do poach—they knows me, and I knows them—but Lor', sir, they 'adn't no grudge against Squire. And if any o' that lot 'd seed 'e a-comin', they'd a run away. 'Twasn't poachers' time, neither. Poachin' ain't done year 'twixt nine and ten of a summer night.'

'I suppose not.'

'If any Redmore man or Sta'mm'th man done it —though Lord 'E knows why they should—'e'll be missin' to-day.'

'Had the late squire any enemies?—any evicted tenants, or that sort of thing?'

'No, sir, no. 'E'd speak 'ard, but 'e acted soft, and everybody made a good bit out of him, one way and another.'

'Then this is more likely to have been done by a stranger than anyone else? Someone whom we

know nothing about, with reasons for being where he was we don't understand. That's what all you say points to.'

'Yes, sir; it do. I 'spec's it to be some stranger.'

'Did you notice whether his watch or studs were missing?'

'No, sir; I did not.'

'Well, I did. He had his watch on, and the studs—he had a dress-waistcoat on, you know—were in his shirt when we took him in.'

'Indeed, sir? I 'adn't observed it. But if anybody'd 'ad it in 'is mind to rob 'im, that ere spring gun 'ud a stopped him, and made 'im cut off meddlin' sharp.'

'Not if the gun didn't go off till the criminal started running or walking away, as we suppose. You can't tell in that case how much time there

was to spare between the death of the Squire and the pressure on that wire.'

'True, sir, true. I 'adn't bore that in mind.'

'Then he wasn't attacked, apparently, for the sake of robbery. And the thing was probably done by a stranger to the neighbourhood. What strangers are there about?'

'Dunno, sir, as there be any. Most too early for trippers and the like o' that. And there ain't many o' that sart comes Sta'mm'th way.'

'There's the crew of that yacht, certainly, but the party who did this ran away in the wrong direction for that, I think.'

'That yacht ain't there, sir. She went away agen last night, so I years.'

'Then that settles that question. Now, Mr. Nobbs, I think I judge you rightly when I say I believe you can keep a thing to yourself?'

'I b'lieve you do, sir.'

'Well, I mean to stay about here for the present, until either I find out something about this, or am convinced that there is nothing to find out here. But I don't want people to know I have any such purpose. I shall just bathe, and go out walks, and throw stones into the sea, and work at my books, as any other man of my sort spending his summer holiday at the seaside might do. Perhaps you can recommend me an inn where I can be decently comfortable, and where, at the same time, if I should go down into the bar or smoking-room just to pass the time of day, I'd be likely to see the ordinary casual people of the place—people who come to have a drink and a gossip, you know. Not a regular aristocratic big hotel, where county families go, and not a mere pub, where it would look funny for me to put up. See?'

'Myes, sir. Well, I should think you couldn't do no 'arm by goin' to the Let the Bees Live. That's in Carter Street—narrer curly street to the left of 'Igh Street, near the sea-front, and passin' by the church.'

Shaw made a note of the address.

'Right; and if you should see or hear anything, perhaps you would give me the straight tip.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, then, good-bye, Nobbs, for the present;' and Shaw shook hands with the worthy old keeper, feeling he had in him a strong, trustworthy, and intelligent ally, who entered as fully and eagerly as himself into the quest.

Perhaps the sentiments serving as motives were different in each, but they were in both cases sufficient. Shaw was a chivalrous gentleman who

wished to serve his friends—among them a merry lady with cornflower eyes — by exposing and punishing him who had worked them most undeserved and pitiable wrong. He took, moreover, a sportsmanlike pleasure in the prospective man-hunt, which he fancied might turn out to be, in a sense, great fun.

Nobbs was simply a loyal old keeper, who wanted to empty both barrels at short range into the man who had murdered his master.

When Shaw had walked slowly back to the house, pensive, his hands in his knickerbocker pockets, raising the bottom of his jacket—a very modern and not very picturesque figure, and yet with a certain grace which not even heather-mixture stockings, burnt-sienna spats, brown tan boots, a pale brown travelling-cap, knickerbocker suit of same, and young English attitude could

wholly obliterate—he found that it was getting towards eight, that the table was being laid for breakfast, and that nobody, except the servants, was down. Under ordinary circumstances he would have gone to Harry's room, roused him up, and chatted while his young friend went through the rites of the tub, toilet, and razor; but as things were, he did not think fit to do so, but sat down in an easy-chair near the window to wait. Of course there was no morning paper; that was delivered from Starmouth between two and three in the afternoon, after it had come from London per Shervil, so he stretched out his hand for a book of some sort which lay on a writing-table in front of the window. He did not know what book, but it was natural to Shaw always to take up the nearest book and look at it when he had nothing to do, even if it turned out to be a seedsman's

catalogue or the stores list. This happened to be the A B C Railway Guide. After idly looking at a few places which struck him as having odd impossible names, such as Bugsworth, Prees, Riccall, and Lairy, he turned to Shervil, for no special reason except that it was the local station, and glanced at the table of trains to and from London. Then the idea flashed into his mind, not unnaturally, that the criminal of last night might have made for the railway. He looked then for the last up-train, and saw that it was timed to start at 10.18. He then reflected that the crime had taken place between nine and ten, and that the direction he and Nobbs had supposed the fugitive to take lay, at any rate at the outset, rather in the direction of the station than otherwise. He did not know exactly how long it would take to walk or run the distance, but Nobbs could tell him that.

If it appeared at all possible, then, for the malefactor to have caught that train, it would obviously be a good thing to ask a few questions at the station. It would not be likely that there would be many passengers from such a place at such a time. If it turned out that any suspicious person went by that train, it would follow that it must be a person who knew his way, for it was nearly dark, if not quite, and Shaw had a sufficiently approximate notion of the distance to know that if there was enough time to catch that train there was not more than enough. Moreover, he had forgotten to question Nobbs as to where the criminal could have come *from*, as well as where he might have gone *to*. He must evidently see Nobbs again about that.

While he was engaged in these reflections, Harry came into the room.

'Ah, there you are. Been down long, Shaw?'

'I've been out for a small *pasear*.'

'Well, you and I will have some breakfast,' said Harry, as he rang the bell. 'You will have to excuse my womenkind this morning; they won't appear.'

'Naturally. I say, Long, I was going to mention that I'll clear out. I'm quite ready at any moment; my loins are girt, and my scrip is packed, don't you know.'

'Well, it's very kind and tactful, and all that, Shaw, but it seems rather rough to turn you out. I don't like it. You needn't be in the least in the way, and I shall have no civilized person to speak to if you go. I don't feel wildly hilarious as it is, and if I'm to see nobody except my relatives and condoling county families from now to October, I think suicidal mania will set in.'

'Poor old man! But I propose staying for a while in Starmouth, and having some bathing. So you can look me up when you like, and we can do some reading, too, if you feel like it.'

'Well, that's an improvement; but still it doesn't seem right for our guest to be staying in a Starmouth lodging.'

'If I didn't stay there, I suppose I'd stay somewhere else. It's logically the same as if I stayed in a London lodging or a Tierra del Fuego lodging, if they have any.'

Here Rawlins came in, dreadfully solemn and dismally correct, bearing an immense Bible and a smaller Prayer-book, walking slowly in the manner of a decrepit but self-conscious 'church officer' of the Presbyterian fashion who precedes the minister from the vestry.

'Oh, I say,' said poor Harry, 'I can't stand this

sort of thing; not to-day, anyhow. I rang the bell for breakfast, Rawlins, for Mr. Shaw and me. We'll let the prayers stand over for the present, until we see what arrangements can be made.'

'Very good, Sir 'Enery,' replied Rawlins tragically, and paced out of the room again in slow time, after which a mumbling and rustling in the passage was heard, betokening the retreat in disorder of a little band of female servants.

'I think that performance before a row of staring print-clad slavies, with Rawlins putting in "Harmen!" wofully at intervals, would have been the last straw,' said Harry. 'I should have fallen into gibbering hysteria.'

Shaw, wishing to divert the subject, said:

'Do you contemplate coming up again in October?'

'Rather. I don't see anything in the circumstances to justify me in ceasing to be educated. Rather the other way.'

'Well, I agree with you. But I thought I'd ask.'

'The funeral will be on Saturday; that will just give time to inform such people as may be concerned. I am sending Rogers after breakfast to fetch up the superintendent, or inspector, or whatever he is, of police. I don't know whether there'll have to be an inquest or not; doctor and policeman will settle that. You'll have to see them, you know, to tell your part in the matter.'

'Yes; of course.'

'It's a very queer thing, and I can't make it out. Do you know what the nature of the injury was, Shaw?'

'No; I was going to ask the doctor that.'

'Oh, well, I'll tell you. It was a stab with a knife, which went into the heart.'

'Was it, indeed? Somehow, I suppose from the association of ideas with poachers and gamekeepers and so on, I had taken for granted, quite unjustifiably, that it was a shot of some kind. I suppose you have no idea or suspicion about it?'

'Not the faintest notion. Poachers don't stab, they shoot, and still more likely, run away without doing either. Besides, the people about here are not built that way; they are not the kind to do big crimes.'

'So I should think.'

Well, to cut this record shorter, the doctor came, and the superintendent and a sergeant of police came, and the gamekeeper was cross-examined, and Shaw was politely interrogated, and Joan's Grove tramped over — a process during which

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Nobbs and Shaw winked at each other as they observed the failure of the official representative of the majesty of the law to detect any of the signs which they had noticed some hours before. Then the superintendent of police made up a preposterous 'theory' about the matter, and had a glass of sherry in the dining-room.

An inquest was held, and a verdict given of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown. Of course the affair made a great sensation in the neighbourhood, and was a godsend to the local papers, and people discussed how it might affect the election, which there is no reason to suppose it affected at all. The surrounding gentry left cards with 'inquiries,' including Mr. and Mrs. P. Vane, and sent rows of empty carriages to the funeral, which was also very largely attended by human beings of all classes,

for the late baronet had been much liked and respected, especially by the poor, though he did lay down the law to them with a thick stick. And Nobbs observed, and mentioned privately to Shaw, that most of the habitual poachers were present, and had gone to the expense of crape for their ancient tall hats. They felt that an undeserved slur was cast on their body by what the paper called 'this dastardly outrage,' and came to show that feeling, as well as to testify their respect for the deceased.

At the Quarter Sessions what the paper called a 'feeling reference' was made to the loss which had been sustained, and that was, for the time, the conclusion of the whole matter.

One other thing happened, or rather failed to happen, about this time which struck the only person whose attention was called to it as odd,

though he did not mention it to anyone, thinking it concerned him alone, and had no bearing on the sorrowful event.

It will be remembered that Harry Long had appointed a meeting with the girl Eva Lee at nine in the evening down by the river, for the purpose of lending her some books. Well, he did not forget this, in spite of the sorrow, the business, and the anxiety and worry of the time, and without saying a word to anyone, selected one or two novels he deemed suitable, and was punctually at the place. He waited for quite half an hour, but no girl came. And he never saw her about the neighbourhood, or in the cottage again, though he often passed it, and generally saw the old *chovihani* of a grandmother enjoying her pipe in the sun with the inscrutable dried-up countenance of a mummy or an old squaw.

CHAPTER VII.

SHAW MOBILIZED.

After the necessary interview with the majesty of the law on the day after the crime, Shaw was driven with his portmanteau to the inn in Starmouth, humanely called Let the Bees Live, whose sign was a hive. The main street of Starmouth was very steep, and curved gently twice—once to the east and once to the west—before it reached the comparatively level ground near the shore. The houses were all old, usually constructed of gray stone, sometimes coated with white plaster, if extra genteel, and roofed with thick small gray slates of a peculiar thin lamination, and a smooth

glisten. The windows, except a few of the shop-windows, had small panes in white wooden frames, and the kind of glass which makes a rod appear a serpent.

The houses were of all sorts of heights, and on one side of the street stood the hollow, charred and roofless shells of two which had burnt down some months ago, and gave the effect of decayed teeth in an otherwise sound set.

To the right—or west—at the bottom of the steep street, was the esplanade, with its solid old cottages with little front gardens, approached up steep narrow whitened steps, and used in the summer time as lodgings.

Behind these rose the hill steeply, clad with green grass, and fluttering linen drying. Along the top of this ascent were again houses.

To the left—or east—at the bottom of the High

Street, was Carter Street, narrow, high, old, and approximately parallel to the seashore, which was approached by long, narrow paved passages or 'closes' between the houses, whose worn and corrugated stone basements the high tides lapped.

The Let the Bees Live was on the inland side of Carter Street, and the clean, low-roofed bedroom which Shaw acquired there had a window with two small lights opening on hinges, and kept open by brass hooks, which looked on the church and churchyard in the foreground, and beyond them had a glimpse of glittering sea. As there was no one else lodging in the house, Shaw was also able to obtain the use of another room, which he used as a sitting-room, and strewed with books, writing materials and pipes as soon as he had unpacked. Then he set forth to buy a two-pound pot of the

one thing indispensable to the peace of mind of a Cambridge man of any standing—Dundee or Aberdeen marmalade, to be used at breakfast and lunch. In point of fact, squish. The mere chops and steaks and bacon and eggs might very well be left to the Bee people to look after.

Having so far arranged his little encampment, and eaten some lunch, Shaw lit his favourite pipe, put on the little cloth cap, and strolled out again in his lounging way to have another interview with Pentony Nobbs.

This led to an examination of the possible route taken by the murderer in order to arrive at the place where he met his victim. It appeared unlikely that he could have come any other way than from the wood alongside the river. It appeared that there were two possible ways of doing this—

one, to start from Starmouth on the nearer side, and walk alongside the creek until it narrowed and became the river; the other, to start from the further side of the creek, walk up-stream till the bridge was reached, cross it, and then walk up the path on the Lowcliff side as before. It should be clearly understood that the inlet or creek, or entrance of the river, was on the westward extremity or boundary of Starmouth, beyond the end of the esplanade, while the steep hill on which the main part of the town stood sloped down towards the river on the west, as well as towards the sea on the south.

'Now, supposing,' said Shaw, 'that he came from the other side of the river, over the bridge, as you describe, where could he come from? Is there any village, or town, or anything over there?'

'Not for miles, sir, and there ain't no road from anywhere so's to come that way. The road what there is goes as far as the mouth of the creek, on the fur side, where the coastguard 'as their watch-'ouse and flagstaff.'

'Well, but doesn't anybody live over that side of the valley at all?'

'There ain't no one there, sir—on'y Crow'ill. They lives over there.'

'Oh, that's where Mrs. Vane lives, isn't it?'

'Yes, sir.'

'How do you get to Crowhill?'

'Over the bridge, sir, and then a bit up the hill on the other side, and then the drive curves in to the left.'

'Any other way?'

'There's a little landing-stage, where the yacht's

boats comes in, and a path up through the wood. That's lower down than the bridge, and on the other side, acourse.'

'Shorter than the driving way?'

'Well, yes, sir, it be sharter—by 'af a mile, you med' say. But you don't never think them folks 'as anything to do wi' it?'

'I don't think of any person more than another at present. I only want to get the lie of the land, so to speak. Now there's another thing I want to ask you. That happened last night, not later than half-past nine, perhaps a few minutes sooner. Could a man have time after that to catch a train at Shervil at eighteen, or say twenty, minutes past ten? Because the last train to London goes at 10.18, and we'll allow that it might be a minute or two late.'

Nobbs reflected, and answered:

'That's farty-eight or fifty minutes, or med be a trifle more, and 'im going 'crass country?'

'Yes.'

''E could do it, sir, but 'e'd 'ave to make 'aste, and 'e'd 'ave to know the way. Leastways, 'e'd 'ave to know the way from Joan's Grove to the finger-postes; the rest's easy enough.'

'But you told me that if a person got on to Redmore Common he was almost certain to strike the road?'

'If he kept up 'ill, yes.'

'Well, supposing he didn't know the way, but had sense enough to continue his direction uphill and inland, guided by the trend of the ground, it wouldn't take him long to find a road and a sign-post telling him the direction and distance?'

'Well, yes, sir, if you puts it that way.'

'Now, Nobbs, I'll tell you what I am going to

do. I am going to start from Joan's Grove, over that gate, along the ditch and over that common, just as you described, with no more knowledge than I now possess, and never having been over the ground in my life. But I shall go as fast as I can, and see if I can get to the Shervil Station inside fifty minutes. When I get there, I shall ask if anybody went by that train last night.'

'Very good, sir. 'Pon my word, if they pleacemen was a bit more like you, we might do summat.'

'All this is strictly between ourselves, Nobbs, mind.'

'Yes, sir; to be sure.'

And Shaw went to the station in the manner he had suggested, deliberately losing a few minutes by climbing half-way up the signpost, and striking a match, on the hypothesis that it was necessary on account of the darkness, there being no one to

observe this outbreak of apparent lunacy on his part. The experiment succeeded. When he came within sight of the station, at the end of a long straight stretch of road, he moderated his pace from a run to a walk, as he did not desire to attract attention, but he was convinced that he could reach the station, if necessary, within the required time.

When he got there, after buying a paper and looking about a little, he asked the ticket-seller—a young lady, by the way—if anyone had booked for London by the 10.18 last night. He said London, simply because it was more probable, from the point of view of this theory, than any intermediate place, and would avoid possible confusion with merely local passengers. The young lady replied that there was one gentleman, she could not see very well through her pigeon-hole

what he was like, but he was a big man, and 'talked peculiar.' Asked what she meant by 'peculiar,' said she thought he must be American. He naturally said very little to her. When she told him the price of the ticket, he said 'How?' instead of 'What?' That struck her as peculiar.

Shaw then found two porters—the only two. One of them had shown a man into a second-class smoking-compartment in the London part of the train. He had a bag, and was tall, broad, and had a moustache; might be between forty and fifty; was smoking a cigar. Was in fairly good time; train was rather late.

Then Shaw went to the refreshment-room, and found that the same passenger had been there, and had a glass of whisky, Irish whisky, which he drank by itself, and then took some water in a separate glass, which struck the second young lady

as odd. He had also bought some matches, and the young lady, who was not a native of the locality, like the one at the booking-office, but a Londoner, thought he was an Irishman. And that was the sum-total of the information.

Shaw drank a glass of ale, as the road was long and dusty, and the weather very hot, and set forth for Starmouth, thinking as he went:

'Now, ought I to have told those two girls not to mention that I have made these inquiries? Hardly. They would be more likely to chatter about it if I told them it was a secret; as it is, they may forget. As one of them says this man seemed American, and the other that he seemed Irish, it is probable that he was both, allowing for the imperfection of their judgment in such matters. The presence of an Irish-American is distinctly odd in these parts; his going by that very train is dis-

tinctly odder. The question is, Where has he gone to? That is what I want to know now, because a big man with an accent and a cigar and a moustache is not easy to find in a town of four million inhabitants of all conceivable sizes and colours and accents. Besides, nearly all Americans go about with moustaches and cigars, as far as I have observed, saying "How?" and "What's that?" to people. I have a very strong impression that he must have been a guest of our esteemed friend Vane; probably one of the exiled patriots imported in his yacht yesterday afternoon. Only I don't see why he should be wandering about in the Longs' private property, and killing poor Sir William. Sir William can't have been *his* landlord, anyway. Besides, the present crisis in British politics has made it a close time for landlords, even over the water. If I were to go on the

strength of former acquaintance, and call on the Vanes, now? Hardly. It might be amusing, but it would not suit my present book to call attention to myself. I don't want to be an object of suspicion to Fenian assassins as yet.'

When Shaw got to Starmouth, he had a bathe in the sea, and then lay on the shore to smoke his pipe and enjoy that repose to which he felt entitled after such a long walk on such a hot day. And he wrestled with big problems as he lay, the course of his thoughts deflected sometimes by recollections of his strolls and conversations with Bessie Long during those idle happy hours before the sudden horror came, the secret, swift, and soundless feet that passed, and left desolation behind them. And there appeared again in his mind the figure of the fine old Englishman, the upright old-world gentleman, sitting at the head of his own hospit-

able table not twenty-four hours ago, enjoying the dignified ease to which his years entitled him; English and Teuton all through, English in his prejudices, English in his pride of England, English in his Protestantism, English in his clean hands and pure heart, and English in his dauntless soul.

Then Shaw's wrath was kindled, and he knew that he would never cease from following after the assassin till he had found him, as long as they twain should live.

He went home after a time, and ate the unpretentious but sufficing dinner with which his inn provided him, and spent some time after dinner in reading. Later, he went down to the bar, and loitered a little over a pipe and glass of whisky to pick up local gossip about the crime, but though that was the principal, if not the only, topic of dis-

course, he heard nothing which was either interesting or suggestive. And several days passed in this manner, Shaw waiting for the information which often comes best unsought, walking, reading, and bathing, and getting acquainted with different people who might be of use.

On Saturday came the funeral as aforesaid. On Saturday also reappeared the yacht *Ierne*, and some of her crew were in the bar of Shaw's inn in the evening. They were quite ready to talk about the murder, which was a novelty to them, and some were honestly ignorant of the whole matter. Shaw observed that all whom he saw were Irishmen, and gave him the impression of being natives of Connaught—one, indeed, spoke familiarly of Oughterard, and another of Killery Bay. Once or twice two of them spoke to one another in the Gaelic, in undertones, and evidently

not intending to be understood. When the landlord, who thought himself a wit, and others tried to chaff them in the usual delicate way considered appropriate by Englishmen, who are surprised and hurt when they hear that Irishmen do not love them as brothers, they took it pleasantly, and generally, in a sly way which only a cultured mind like Shaw's could entirely appreciate, gave back rather better than they got. They made no disguise whatever of their expectation and hope for Home Rule, and Shaw knew better than to argue. He saw very well that these lithe black-haired 'boys' with the ready tongue, the sun-tanned skin, and the dark Celtic eyes that could speak were strong partizans, probably Fenians, and not likely to be backward in a 'physical force' movement. But he saw equally, as far as he could judge human, and Irish human, nature, that they

must be exonerated from any guilty knowledge of the matter he had at heart.

On Monday morning he had occasion to go into the post-office, which was in Starmouth High Street, for some stamps. There were one or two persons there already, and the solitary clerk in attendance was occupied in making out a money-order, giving change, and listening to the muddled questions and arguments of an elderly man, who could not be made to accept the simple notion, put before him in words of one syllable, that if rules are made they must be kept. So Shaw had to wait a little. While he was waiting, a tall man came from the counter where telegraph-forms and chained pencils lay with a telegraph-form written, which he pushed partly under the wire screen, holding the paper in his hand so that most of the address was covered by his thumb. Shaw was a

little behind, and recognised the man who had travelled in the train with him, the man he had described as a shady Odysseus of Scotch extraction, who had gone to Crowhill. Shaw looked at the telegram hurriedly, and read as fast as he could, which was not very fast, as the writing was upside down—that is, placed for the clerk to read, not the customer. What he succeeded in reading was, 'Morris Browning, White Lion,' then something hidden by the thumb, then 'W.' Below that came the message: 'Coming old place to-night. Will bring and drop parcel.'

Shaw changed his mind about the stamps, and quietly left the office before the man had looked round or recognised him, and walked straight back to the Let the Bees Live. Here he wrote down at once the fragment of address, and the message, in order not to forget a word of it. He saw that

W. implied London. What the White Lion was, was of course some public-house. What the thumb hid was the name of the street — the essential point, as the thumb's owner probably knew when he concealed it. The number of White Lions to be found in the W. district alone was probably as great as the number of Americans with moustaches and cigars. Mr. Morris Browning sounded like an assumed name—made up from the names of two well-known poets, no doubt. Very likely the man who left by the 10.18 a few days ago; at any rate, sufficiently likely to justify Shaw in following up the idea, on the chance of being led to something. 'Coming old place' probably meant that someone, presumably the Scottish gentleman, was going to London, and would be found at some understood rendezvous, not necessarily the White Lion. The parcel

might mean anything — dynamite as likely as not.

Shaw consulted the A B C, and found that the one fast train in the day to town left Shervil at 12.43; it was now between ten and half past. Shaw packed a small handbag with necessaries, put his other possessions into his portmanteau, asked the landlord to take charge of the latter, and said that he was obliged to go to town for a few days, but would return, writing or wiring to say when. In the meantime, he would pay what was owing up to the present. Then he wrote a note to Harry Long to the effect that he was called away for a few days, but would return to Starmouth. He decided that it did not much matter whether the man who sent the telegram travelled to town by the 12.43 train or not. The probability was that he would do so.

Shaw's plan of proceeding was this. An omnibus started from the Royal Stag Hotel in the High Street to catch the 12.43 train at Shervil. He engaged the box-seat on this, and was conveyed to the station. He intended going to town in any case, but was encouraged by seeing a fly drive up with the tall Scotchman and a small, keen-eyed, dark man with a black spiked moustache whom he did not know by sight—no doubt another of those suspicious Crowhill guests. They took second-class single tickets to London, and Shaw followed their example. Now, in the train, which came up from Exeter, and was going *viâ* Salisbury and Basingstoke, a part only was destined to go all the way to Waterloo, and in this part there was only one second-class smoking-compartment, and into that, consequently, Shaw and the other two got. There were one or two travellers in it already, but

they got out on the way, at Basingstoke. Shaw intended, on getting to London, to look up all the White Lions in the W. district in the directory, and see if any one or more of them was kept by anyone with a suggestively Irish name—rather a wild-goose chase, evidently—and then to pump a certain journalistic acquaintance of his called Phil Whelan, a good-natured man of intemperate habits who had for a short time been in Parliament, and was supposed to know all the 'boys' in a general way, and a good deal of current political gossip as well. Whelan was not likely to know any secrets of great importance, but he was very likely to know all the common London resorts of patriots, and the knowledge he possessed would not be very difficult to extract from him.

In the meantime, as he travelled in the train, additions and improvements to this plan occurred

to him, as will appear. Of course he and Macgregor nodded to one another as casual acquaintances, though neither knew the other's name, and spoke of the weather, and the beauty of the scenery at Starmouth. Shaw suppressed the fact that he had ever known the Vanes, and soon, so to speak by gravitation, the conversation settled on the recent murder. Shaw observed that the thing was very mysterious, and hinted that he had heard it said in the town that a strange man had left Shervil by the last train for London on the night of the crime. Here both the others seemed interested, and the Scotchman asked what sort of a man. Shaw replied that he hadn't an idea, upon which the interest of each seemed to dwindle, and the smaller man said that it was not very likely that the person would ever be discovered under such circumstances.

In the course of further conversation, it appeared that the smaller man (to save circumlocution he will be called Stevens for the future, it being understood that he was only 'the smaller man' to Shaw) was a stranger in London, whereon Macgregor offered to recommend a hotel, and drop him at it, if he would come in the same cab, which Stevens accepted.

When they arrived at Waterloo, it appeared that Macgregor had a portmanteau in the luggage-van, which, of course, occasioned a little delay. Shaw took advantage of that delay to select a smart-looking hansom, and tell the driver to follow another cab which he would point out.

'You will go empty, you see, so that you can crawl or drive fast just as may be necessary, without it seeming odd. Most likely one of the gentlemen will be dropped somewhere, while the other

will go on. Notice where the one is dropped, but follow the other, as far as he goes. Then come and tell me all about it to-morrow morning at this address. Here's half a quid on account, and you shall have the other half to-morrow morning, if you do it all right. Understand?'

'Yes, sir; rawther.'

'Well, there they are, tall dark man and short dark man with waxed moustache, with a porter following with a bag and portmanteau. Spot them?'

'Yes, sir.'

'All right. Well, I don't want to be seen talking to you. Don't lose my address.'

'Right, sir!'

And Shaw walked away with his bag up the steps leading to the departure platform, from which advantageous position he watched his plan being carried out.

The address he had given was a club to which he belonged, where a bedroom might be obtained. Shaw's home was in London, but he did not wish his relatives to know he was in town, that would only embarrass his movements. He wanted to be free night and day to do whatever might be required by the conditions of the duty he had imposed on himself. It might also be added that Shaw had made a practice and pastime of exploring and making himself acquainted with all parts of London, both from an antiquarian and a modern interest in that town, and that his consequent knowledge of it was intimate and vast. He knew the London of Elizabeth, of the Stuarts, of the Hanoverians, of Dickens, and of to-day; and could tell you who was born, or lived, or died in which house, and what used to stand where something else now stands, and what was the origin of the

strange names which appear still in apparently inappropriate surroundings. And a knowledge of London was naturally very useful to him on an occasion like the present.

Having engaged a bedroom at the club and left his bag there, he strolled away towards the Strand, where he began the search for Mr. Phil Whelan. That was a simple task. You took Ludgate Circus or Charing Cross as a starting-point, and 'drew' the different houses of refreshment until you found him in one of them. Shaw went first to the Gaiety, where he did not see Whelan, but had some food. It was near six now, and he had had nothing since breakfast. Then he looked in at the door of the Wellington, passed on, and tried the Vienna Lager Beer Saloon. There his quarry was, a fine tall man by nature, but shaky and untidy and unshaven by usage, leaning with one hand on

a table, and grasping a glass of 'teacher' in the other. Whelan was on the extreme verge of sobriety, and grasped Shaw's hand with a nervous heartiness.

'How are ye, surr?' he said. 'I've not been seeing you this long whoile.'

Shaw and Whelan had once been schoolboys together in Belfast, but the changes and chances of years had taken them asunder.

'I'm very well. Are you prosperous?'

'I'm as prosperous as I can expect to be There's some pneumonia here I have to take home with me,' he said, tapping his chest; 'what are ye doan' now?'

'I came to see you. I drew three—no, two—houses licensed pursuant to Act of George II. before I found you.'

'And are ye goan' to give me a drink, Jim?'

'How long is it since you had any grub, Phil?'

'Oh, I don't know at all. I think I had a *patty de foy grah* sandwich at twelve.'

'Come upstairs inside, and have a decent meal and a lager. That's much better for pneumonia than "teacher" on an empty stomach.'

'Ah, you're a man!'

And they went into the long inner room, where Shaw ordered for Whelan such things as he thought the poor creature's morbid digestion could assimilate, while Phil's fingers twiddled tremulously the ends of his muddy brown moustache, and his kindly but moist blue eyes glanced about and behind him in a fidgety way. Phil Whelan had the kindest face that ever man looked on, and a good intellect and an original and poetic imagination; but he was a big child in roaring London town, and no

one was there to take care of him, and he became a lost child, alone in the dark, where poverty, failure, dirt, and drunkenness peep and haunt and follow, yet those who knew him best loved him best. He is in the light now.

Passing over the intermediate conversation, it may be said that when Shaw took occasion to say:

'By the way, I suppose you know the White Lion?'

'What, Katey Hynes's?'

'Yes,' replied Shaw at a venture.

'Rather. Sure she's Peter Rowan's daughter.'

Shaw thought that was enough. He could get the street now from the Directory. However, he added:

'Perhaps you know Mr. Browning?'

'What, the powut?'

'No, Mr. Morris Browning.'

'Look here, me son, what are you gettin' at? Who've ye bin talkin' to?'

'Nobody in particular. Why?'

'That's the name someone in danger takes among—the boys, you know. There's been many a Mawrus Browning at Peter Rowan's before now, up in his big attic. I don't know who'd be usin 'ut now. I'm past all those times. The boys wouldn't trust me with anything now. They know I'm a fool, and they think if I'd a repeater and a bay'nut given me I'd swop ut for whisky.'

Having got as much as he could expect out of poor Phil Whelan, Shaw soon afterwards left. In the morning, while he was at breakfast, the cabman arrived. His story was as follows:

'We druv along York Road, sir, and over West-

minster Bridge, and along the Embenkment, and up the Evenue to the 'Otel Capitole, second block on the near side, and the little un was puddown. T'other went to the Gyety and give one o' them pyper cheps two-d. for tykin' of his bag up to the clowk-reum—thet's up the steers at the big intrance, ye know.'

'Yes.'

'Then I wyted abaht and crawled round the cawner of Cathy-Rhine Street till 'e come aht, and if a copper said anythink, "'Gyged!" I says. "Ow!" 'e says. "Yus," I says, "thet's raht." "Ow!" 'e says, "is it?" 'e says. "Yus," I says. "Gow owm and bile yer liver for the ket's tea," I says. "None o' your lip," 'e says. "Now, sir," I says, "I wouldn't sye anything disrespeckful to a thurrer gentleman and a 'ensome-made men like you. I knows my plyce better." And so, sir, one

wy and 'nother I pawssed the tahm agribble enough. Then I got the *Ecker*-boy to mind keb whiles I 'ed a pint of fower awf with two a gin in it and a drop of peppermint at the Two Spies. And soon awfter I done that, the gentleman come out with another gentleman, not so tall, a furrener, with a brown beard, and they 'ails me, and 'as the beg brought dahn agin.'' '

'Lucky chance, their hailing you.'

'Now, sir, I was a-leadin' for it. Worn't no chawnce at all. And I tykes them to an 'ouse in Pentonville Road—not a pub, a lodgin', I took it for—and they goes in there, keeps me, and says they'll be abaht a quarter of a *h*our; so I goes and 'as a drop a stout, while a boy watched the keb—I'd putt the nosebag on. Then they comes out with a wooden box, very keerful; not a pertickly lawge box, but 'eavy, and libelled "Glawss,

with keer. This sahd ep." And I tykes 'em to an 'ouse in Sowow — Old Compton Street, Sowow.'

'The White Lion?'

'The very syme, sir. And they goes in there, and pays me my fire, and awsts me wot I'd 'ev, so I 'ad a drop o' gin and gingerbeer. Then I didn't know but what they maht kem aht agen, so I fetched the keb up agin the kerb on the near side at another 'ouse, where a boot-boy watched it, so as I could know if they come aht from the White Lion, and I 'ad a drop o' rum and milk, and a look at *Spawtin Lahf*. Well, sir, I give 'em till 'leven o'clock, and neither of 'em kem aht, so I 'ad a drop a gin cowld with a chep I'd pelled with in the pub as give me a tip on the Broken-wind 'Endie-kep, and then I chucked it, as a copper kem syin' somethink nawsty abaht leavin' my keb, and druv

off furious up Shawfsbry Evenue. 'Ope I done wot you wanted, sir?'

'Yes; I'm much obliged to you. Here's the other half-sovereign I promised.'

'Thanky, sir; you're a gentleman. 'Ev my cawd, sir, 'gainst you might want me agin?'

'Thanks; good-morning.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WHITE LION.

SHAW was elated at the success which had so far attended his researches, and reasonably proud of the ingenuity which had suggested the means of conducting them. The results arrived at he summed up as follows:

The White Lion is a resort of Irish conspirators and their sympathizers.

The name Morris Browning is that of a refugee from the law (law = 'trouble' in Whelan's vernacular).

The present Morris Browning is most likely the

man who left Shervil by the 10.18 on the night of the crime.

The next obvious step was to find out if Mr. Morris Browning answered the description given by the two young women and the porter at Shervil Station. The matter of the Scotchman, the 'furrener,' and the box labelled 'glass, with care,' were provocative of suspicion, but impertinent to the immediate issue.

Consequently Shaw turned his steps towards Old Compton Street with the intention of either seeing Mr. Morris Browning, or getting a description of him. It occurred to him that this would require much tact, which he flattered himself he had, and some courage, in which he believed he was not wholly deficient. But he reflected that he was perfectly free to enter a licensed public-house, that it was a common enough thing to do, and

that in any case there was a street full of inhabitants, and a policeman not far off in case of violence.

'Moreover,' he concluded, 'I've the use of my hands, and I fancy I could walk into something more formidable than the White Lion's dirty work to be of any service to Bessie Long.'

You see, loyalist and Cambridge graduate and so forth as he was, Shaw was an Irishman after all by nature, or perhaps he would not have assumed vengeance to be such an object and such a consolation to the bereaved family in general, and to the girl he loved in particular. Wherefore he walked into the bar of the White Lion, and asked for a glass of bitter. There was no one just then in the small, dingy, sawdust-carpeted compartment, and he was served by a shy, rather good-looking, dark

girl, whom he asked, after preliminaries about the weather:

'Is Mr. Morris Browning still staying here?'

'I don't know, sir; I've only been here a very short time.'

Was this true, or was it caution?

'You don't remember hearing the name at all?'

'No, sir; I don't know the names of any of the gentlemen that use here. I'm quite new to the business.'

'Ah, I wonder how I could find out?'

'Mrs. Hynes would know, sir. She's out just now, but I'm expecting her in every minute; she only stepped out to buy some vegetables a little while ago.'

'I see. Well, I'll wait a minute or two, if you don't mind?'

'Certainly, sir.'

'I don't think, if it's not a rude question, that you are a London girl?'

'Oh no, sir; I'm quite new to London. I like the country best.'

'I wonder, now, if you come from my country?'

'No, sir; I've never been there.'

'How in the world do you know?'

'You're an Irish gentleman, sir, are you not?'

'Well, I am; but what sorcery told you that?'

'Well, you must excuse me for making such a remark, but you sometimes, just a little, speak like one. I've heard a good many Irish gentlemen speaking since I've been in business here.'

'I dare say you have. And you detect a brogue in me?'

'I shouldn't call it a brogue. It's the tone of your voice sometimes, and the way you say certain words.'

'I see.'

'This,' thought Shaw, 'I never thought of. It may advantage me with Mrs. Hynes.'

'What are you, then?' added he. 'You hardly look English. Pardon my continuing to be so personal.'

'Don't mention it, sir. There was a gentleman here last night who spoke my language,' she added with a shy smile.

Here a customer entered.

'Really? And may one ask——'

'*Tute can't rokker the jib shon mande, Rya,*' replied the girl, laughing.

'*Tatcho!*' replied a somewhat familiar male voice behind Shaw. '*Kushto Bak mi chavvi!*'

Shaw turned, and saw the little man with the black moustache, unspiked this time. Each was surprised to meet the other. Stevens said:

'My fellow-traveller of yesterday, I see. Strange place to meet you in.'

'Just what I was going to remark.'

'Here's Mrs. Hynes, sir,' said the girl.

Mrs. Hynes came in, a stoutish woman approaching middle age, dowdy in appearance, and carrying a basket of marketings. She exhibited a Dublin accent.

'Oh, good-morning,' said Shaw. 'I only wanted to ask if Mr. Morris Browning was still staying here.'

Mrs. Hynes stared at Shaw, Stevens became suddenly keenly interested, and Mrs. Hynes said:

'I don't know the name at all.'

'Sure she takes you for a polus-man!' observed Stevens, suddenly assuming a perfectly convincing Liffey twang, something between the 'corner boy' and a fairly educated man.

Mrs. Hynes took refuge in an inner room.

'I think you were a friend of the late Sir W. L.?' said Stevens further, dropping again into his natural manner of speech.

'I was,' said Shaw, puzzled.

'Interested in the mysterious case, no doubt?'

'Yes. Oh, certainly!'

Here the girl in the bar began to listen to the conversation, to which she had previously been indifferent.

'You think there's something more than a common vulgar crime there—something the local police would not be likely to imagine?'

'I think so.'

'So do I.'

'And I would give a good deal to find out and cop the beggars,' added Shaw firmly.

'So would I,' replied Stevens in a tone inaudible to the girl, who was evidently paying attention.

'Really? May I ask why you discuss this matter with me at all?'

'I must think about the answer I will give you to that. You are Mr.—Shaw, I think?'

'Well, you seem to know all about it. Go on.'

'Something—we will pass over what—led you to connect this hospitable tavern with the name of a great poet—I speak darkly for obvious reasons—I should say a great poet and a lesser one—and that name with certain matters you desire to elucidate?'

'Connected, I trust, ultimately with a wreath —of hemp—near the tomb of that great poet.'

Shaw and Stevens were examining each other closely, with a view to guessing how much each could trust the other.

'Now, Mr. Shaw, will you kindly allow me to have a short interview with you, not here, but in a public thoroughfare, within easy reach of a policeman, that you may know that no ambuscades or violence are to be looked for?'

'Very well. I don't say that I have anything of interest to say, though.'

And they left the White Lion.

'Now, Mr. Shaw, I know you are a gentleman, a University man, no doubt of distinction in your own line, a loyal subject and a faithful friend. I know some of those things, and I deduce the rest

from your proceedings, and from my general experience of human nature. But you don't make at all a good detective. You ought not to go to a place like that and blurt out a name. It will put them on their guard, and give the trouble perhaps of chivying them into some other place. Now, if you can help me, I'll help you.'

'This is all very fine, my friend; but who are you, and what are you up to?'

'You see,' continued Stevens imperturbably, as they turned into Wardour Street and walked slowly towards Leicester Square, 'Katey Hynes is sure to mention that a strange man has been asking after Morris Browning, and that will make trouble. Me she will describe as a Dublin boy, perhaps an informer, but that won't matter, as it will mislead from a guess at the truth. You she will represent as—let me see, you don't look like a D.I. or a

sergeant. She'll say you are some kind of a lawyer. What a pity you asked for Morris Browning! Having found out so much—for you have found out a good deal for an amateur, perhaps partly by luck—to give it all away so easily! It's blasphemous!'

'Again, may I ask who the devil you are, and what the devil you want? That part of the plot remains obscure.'

'Now, sir, will you give me your word, as a gentleman, that you will regard what I tell you as confidential, provided it involves you in no compounding, misprision or condonation of any offence against the Queen's peace, her throne, and dignity?'

'Very well.'

'Now recollect, I am doing something very like putting my life in your hands.'

'But, my dear sir, my hands are quite full enough without that.'

'It is necessary. Circumstances have thrown us together in a peculiar way, and each is probably in a position to help the other. I am going to give you my confidence in the hope of subsequently gaining yours.'

'I make no promises.'

'No. I did not ask you for any, beyond keeping what I tell you to yourself. I am a member, and a high member, of the H.Q.A. That is an anagram —I should say a cipher transposition of I.R.B., meaning the Irish Republican Brotherhood.'

'Ah, some monastic order, no doubt?'

'Just so, and the abbot lives in Chicago.'

'But I say, recollect your own conditions, my friend. What price misprision of treason?'

'Oh, you will see in a minute! I am not an

Irishman, as you can probably tell. I am as loyal a subject of Queen Victoria as you are, and I have been working this business in America for the last five years.'

'For a consideration?'

'Don't deny that the Government pays me. I am not a rich man. What do you think Secret Service Money is voted for?'

'You are in short what is known as an approver or informer?'

'Not quite. He is generally a person who gives away his own friends to save himself and to get a reward. Now I have gone into the thing from conviction, from the outset, and never changed my purpose, whatever the risks and difficulties. I began as a spy in the camp of what I have continuously and consistently regarded as the enemy, and I am one still. I dare say you think it a very

contemptible occupation, but I think it a noble one. I undergo that contemptuous toleration from loyal subjects as well as daily danger of my life from the other parties. That is the reward for putting such talents as I possess, and my own life, at the disposal of a set of unscrupulous enemies of England, in order to baffle their plots and often save the lives and security of the comfortable respectable English public, who give very little consideration to the matter.'

'I think your vindication is perfectly fair, but will you pardon my asking an entire stranger how I am to know that you actually are what you represent yourself to be?'

'A natural question. Well, I suppose you are convinced from the places and the company you have seen me in that I know something of these matters, but you want to be assured of the genuine-

ness of my pretension to be in the confidence of the Government ?'

'Quite so.'

'Very good. You see that man coming up the street towards us and Old Compton Street ?'

'Yes.'

'He is Inspector Keogh, of the C.I.D., going to join an R.I.C. man in Old Compton Street, to have anybody suspicious leaving or entering the White Lion pointed out to him and identified. He will tell you. And I could hardly have foreseen that I should require to convince you of this, and so have prearranged it all, could I ?'

They met the man pointed out, and Stevens said something in an undertone to Inspector Keogh, a reddish-fair, thin-faced little man with a short beard and large blue eyes, who turned to Shaw and said :

'This is my card and authority, sir. It's all right. Quite right to be careful, too.'

And he passed on.

'Very well,' said Shaw, 'I am convinced. Come to a restaurant and have some lunch, and we will talk.'

'Thank you. I shall be delighted. By the way, my name is Stevens. It's not my real name, but I find it useful and inoffensive.'

They went into the Hotel de Florence in Rupert Street and ate a *seconda collazione* or *déjeuner à la fourchette*, irrigated with Barolo and followed by 'long Virginias' and a candlestick. During the repast Shaw told what we know already, as far as his personal share in the matter went, and Stevens' bright dark eyes were full of eager and changing expression. When Shaw had finished his recital, which was told in his gravely facetious manner,

with lapses into graceful irrelevancies into which he was tempted by some jack o'lantern of style, phrase or allusion, Stevens said:

'Very good indeed, and very interesting, Mr. Shaw. Now let me see if I can't dot your *i*'s and cross your *t*'s.'

'Dot your eyes!' observed Shaw meditatively; 'wouldn't that make rather a happy objurgation?'

'Do let us be serious, Mr. Shaw.'

'Certainly. By the way, how did you find out my name?'

'Well, as you had a leather label to your bag with "J. R. Shaw, Trin. Coll., Camb." on it, and as we travelled in the same compartment, it was a little obvious, was it not?'

'And it was on the strength of that that you worked the omniscience spoof on me this morning?'

'That is all. But people don't always think of these simple little tricks. Many people don't think at all. But to come to the point. I came from America to Paris, from Paris to Boulogne, and from Boulogne to Starmouth. The sea-voyage was done in Vane's yacht. The man that came with me, and the man, no doubt, who left by the last train that night, now in hiding at the White Lion——'

'Regarded as a hiding-place—the White Ostrich.'

'As Morris Browning, is Mike Doherty, generally called Captain Doherty. He was in trouble in Ireland in '65 or '66, and was also in the Federal army in the Civil War. Since that time he has been a soldier of fortune and a conspirator by turns. Vane was with him a good deal. They picked up a lot of money filibustering in South America a few years ago, and that's

where Mrs. Vane comes in. But I was told Doherty had gone back to France, and the yacht disappeared to make it seem likely. That means that they suspect me. I had no idea, till you told me, that Doherty had gone to London. That explains several things. It is quite possible in this connection that you have been the means of saving my life, Mr. Shaw.'

'Very gratifying, I'm sure. But go on.'

'The long Scotchman is General Ronald Macgregor, another old filibusterer, and a great friend of Doherty and Vane. He doesn't care a scrap about Ireland, but he'll fight faithfully for anyone who pays him. They've probably engaged him to organize and drill men for a rising. The German whom Macgregor picked up at the Gaiety is most likely Dr. Pohlmann, a dirty little Chicago Anarchist, who's going to cook up high explosives and smoke-

less powder, and that sort of thing, at Crowhill. Yacht handy, you see, to convey things to Ireland if necessary.'

'And this gang are going to upset the British Empire?'

'That's the idea.'

'I see. Well?'

'Somehow or other they must have spotted me when I was at Crowhill, so Doherty, against whom there is a true bill for T. F. owing, bolts to London under guise of bolting to France, to warn Pohlmann, who was no doubt on the point of coming down to Starmouth with his "glass with care," and hides himself at the White Lion—as if I didn't know Katey Hynes's! However, I kidded them I was a stranger in London, as you heard in the train yesterday.'

'What did you want there this morning? Be-

cause you didn't then know Mr. Morris Michael Doherty was there.'

'I wanted to find out if Macgregor had gone there. Not knowing then, mind, as I do now, that Macgregor and Co. suspect me.'

'What do you think they'll do now?'

'Now? Oh, something stupid. They'll leave Mrs. Hynes's and go to Pohlmann's lodgings in Pentonville Road most likely, for safety, having no idea that they have been traced there already, thanks to your promptitude and smartness.'

'But supposing they go to some new place, say Dalston or Camberwell?'

'Keogh will look after that.'

'But why don't the police go straight in and arrest them?'

'Impatient as usual! You want to pull fruit off when it will fall of itself if you give it time to

ripen. There is no evidence at present. We don't know officially that the foreign gentleman really *is* Pohlmann, or whether his "glass with care" isn't some samples of chandelier-dazzles. I am not perfectly certain, even, that Morris Browning is Doherty, until somebody sees him who can identify him. And if he's run in on the old charge, it will only cause a general scuttle, and we shall lose the whole bag, and no court would be hard on a man for taking part as a lad in an abortive Fenian shindy twenty years ago, and he'd be difficult to identify or convict, too. About this murder now: do you know that the man Lee has disappeared from Starmouth? You know whom I mean?'

'Yes; but I didn't know he'd disappeared.'

'He has. The local police had strong suspicions of him, because he was known to be a gipsy and a

frequent and skilful poacher. He and his daughter have both left; but they left on different days, and may have gone in different directions, or they may have met at an appointed place.'

'What do you think about it?'

'Hardly know what to think. I must consider the matter, and I'll give you my opinion by-and-by. If I could find Lee or his daughter, it would open up matters.'

'What do you suppose these ruffians are contemplating?'

'They are up to some game. These wary old birds of prey like Doherty and Macgregor and Vane wouldn't be all coming to England about the same time for nothing. Vane and his country house, too!'

'Not to speak of his Conservatism!'

'I tell you there are two kinds of these people.

There are a lot of babies to whom signs and oaths and passwords are meat and drink, and there are a few who mean business, and don't give a cuss for anybody. Our friends here belong to the latter class. I'll write a book about it all some day, and make the good old British Public sit up.'

'Then you'll have to inhabit an ironclad cell in Spitzbergen, I should think. It is possible that the brotherhood might feel a little natural irritation at having been calmly "given away" by their own Perpetual Grand, or Chief Parallelogram, or Lord High Pentacle, or whatever you are.'

'Yes; I dare say they might be annoyed. But a man gets used to an unsafe life somehow.'

'You know, what I don't understand is the connection between all this treason business and

the murder of my unfortunate host the other day.'

'I think we'll make that clearer. From your description of the geography of the place, and from my knowledge, or what amounts to knowledge, that Doherty disappeared while I was talking to Mrs. Vane in the parlour, that he was a stranger in the locality, and that there was not much time to lose, I conclude that he was conducted by Lee by short cuts to the station, and that their meeting with this poor old gentleman was purely accidental. This is not wholly *a priori*, because Lee came in with the tray much later than usual, and after he had been rung for twice, and explained that he had been getting Doherty to bed, who was supposed to be drunk. But a man who is so drunk as to require assistance to bed doesn't generally go away in a yacht before daybreak, as he was repre-

sented as doing. I understand that it was actually on Sir William Long's own land that this murder was committed?'

'Yes.'

'Then it's ten to one he stopped them as suspicious characters and trespassers, one of them being actually known to him as a reputed poacher, and the other having no plausible excuse for being where he was. It was indispensable to catch the last train, and a few minutes might make all the difference, so this poor old chap is put out of the way as an obstacle, without regard to his personality, just as if he had been a stray cow, or a fallen tree, or anything else merely in the way. Which of them did it we can't at present tell, but any way, whichever struck the actual blow, the other is an accessory. This is all extremely probable, but recollect that there is not a scrap of

decent evidence for it. Why didn't you find a weapon somewhere, Mr. Shaw? You may be sure the party who owned that knife threw it away somewhere.'

'What do you think had better be done now?'

'I think that a good deal of nothing had better be done for some little time to come, to let the scare subside which will have been caused by their suspicions of me, and your asking for M. B. at Mrs. Hynes's. I will disappear entirely, and try and get up a rumour that I'm dead, if I can. You go back to Starmouth again, and see that strict look-out is kept on Vane's place, and if anyone leaves it or arrives at it, let me know at once.'

'Don't the police watch that place?'

'I know better than to let them know anything about it; they'd spoil the whole game. They are

all right in London, but not at Starmouth, where everybody knows everybody else by sight. And let me know particularly if Mrs. Vane leaves for London. I've a strong impression that she will be used by-and-by, as the most innocent-looking party in the gang, to come up to town and fetch away Dr. Pohlmann's "glass with care," as part of her luggage. I shall then bottle someone in possession of something, or, rather, Keogh will. I shall keep in the background.'

'What, another "brave little woman," eh?'

'Something of that sort. It is also on the cards that this particular brave little woman may be induced, either by fear or money, or both, to turn approver, or I'm not as good a judge of human nature as I think I am. She is intended by nature for——'

'Let us say for what she is,' said Shaw, with a

gentle smile. 'Very well, Mr. Stevens, I shall be glad to go back to Starmouth, and will make arrangements with the old gamekeeper to keep an eye on Crowhill. Where will a letter or wire find you?'

'Edmund Stevens, Muller's Private Hotel, York Road. That is handy for Waterloo, you see.'

'Yes. Well, good-bye; don't get assassinated.'

'Good-bye, Mr. Shaw; glad to meet you.'

'Rum beggar!' reflected Shaw.

CHAPTER IX.

CONSULTING HIS SOLICITOR.

SHAW went back again to his quarters at the Let the Bees Live, and some time elapsed during which several things happened. Among others, the General Election was fought and finished, resulting in the return of a large majority in favour of the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and excitement as to the issue was succeeded by curiosity as to what the Government would 'do.'

Young Sir Henry Long was perturbed in his mind on political and sentimental matters. Having survived the first horror and excitement of his

father's sudden and shocking death, he began to find Lowcliff and its daily life intolerably tedious. Not a human being came to call except the clergyman, and Harry did not take an interest in the clergyman.

Lady Long was genuinely grieved, of course, at Sir William's death; but even had she not been, she would not think of sending out cards to 'return thanks for kind inquiries' one day before the prescribed period for seclusion had determined, nor, however heart-broken, would she have sent out such cards a day after it had been decreed by social tradition that visits might again be received. She also took a gloomy pleasure in discussing with Mrs. Busk (the Starmouth mantua-maker) the exact proportions and ingredients of orthodox attire for a widow belonging to a county family.

Harry had struck at performing the patriarchal

office of family prayer conductor, so Lady Long read the chapter and the collects—the same old collects—herself, in a peculiarly depressing manner, apparently intended to convey a perpetual meek reproach to Harry, whom the practice exasperated into a wild desire to throw things about, especially when Rawlins bleated forth his dolorous 'Hormen!' Rawlins had also (no doubt from grief) developed a practice of breathing in a loud asthmatic manner during prayers, which was not suited to calm irritable nerves.

Moreover, Lady Long had no kind of occupation (except what is called 'work'), so that she perpetually talked. She would ramble imperceptibly into the common every-day gossip and trivial reminiscences which had made up the bulk of her ordinary conversation before the bereavement, and would then suddenly pull herself up, and sigh, and

say: 'Ah! it's different now,' in a tone of sad resignation. Soon afterwards she would ramble off into gossip again. And the worst of it was that it was all *old* gossip, as the system of social seclusion prevented her hearing any more items.

Bessie, who was very fond of her father, bore the brunt of this, but had occupations to fill her mind, as she did the housekeeping, and was fond of books, and her mother worried her unspeakably by talking of the weather and the servants when Bessie was thinking of her dead father, and talking of her bereavement and quoting texts when Bessie had just for a few minutes succeeded in forgetting it in the pages of some interesting book.

Now, the results of this were that both Bessie Long and her brother sought occasional relief from the intolerable dreariness and petty worry of their home after their respective fashions. Bessie went

for long walks in the country in the afternoons, and I may add, without imputing anything forward or unladylike to her, that in the course of these country walks, if she did happen to meet anyone she knew, that person was more likely to be Shaw than anyone else. It was an accident—nearly, the first time, but afterwards it really happened much too often to be always accidental, and one cannot help thinking that Shaw must have received on one day some hint or indication of the time and direction of her walk on the next. And please why not, O all of you who have quite cheerfully done the same? And when she came home later on, it was remarked that her walks seemed to do her good, and to restore her colour and spirits a little.

As for Harry, well, Harry, as has been delicately hinted once or twice, had something of the fool

in his composition, and when he thought nobody knew anything about it, he used to go and call on Mrs. Vane. This did very well for a little while, but soon Mrs. Vane began to get tired of him, and to find him and his poetry, and his precocious and elaborate 'cynicism' (a tender plant to be cultivated with some care), and his funny stories about Cambridge and the cutting things the late Master of Trinity used to say, quite as tedious as *he* found the Lowcliff domestic topics and family worship. And one day he found Shaw there, taking tea and bread-and-butter like an old friend of the family, and being mightily purred over by Mary Carmen Juanita Josefina, who was trying to—what shall I call it?—to *get him back again*, and not exactly succeeding, though she talked her best kind of broken English in Spanish-Irish, and smoked to him, and played that everlasting guitar to him,

and put a rose in his coat out of her hair, and gave herself the benefit—the full benefit—of her most becoming stockings and slippers.

Shaw appreciated it all quietly, but did not 'give himself away.' He had seen it all done before, but he smiled and was bland. Harry was not 'in' this at all, and was distressed and disgusted and amazed and wrathful at finding himself taking what is popularly known as a back seat. But he took a mean revenge. He told Bessie he had been there, and that Shaw was established as tame cat in ordinary to that household. And there was a large difference of opinion subsequently between Shaw and Bessie, which can only be described as an awful row, taking a good deal of time and explanation to bring to a satisfactory and pacific conclusion. After setting this nasty little mine to explode in his absence, Harry went 'up to town'

on the pretext of seeing his solicitor. Lady Long, of course, saw that for a recently succeeded country baronet to see his solicitor was a most right and proper thing, though the purpose of the interview was left perhaps a little vague. So Harry went to town and saw his solicitor. There are some who say that he never saw his solicitor at all, but, as the cautious Herodotus would say, I know not if these things be all true.

At all events I know this: On the following day, being still in London, Harry felt thirsty about mid-day, and entered, with the view of alleviating that feeling, a place often patronized by the young gentlemen from his own University (as well as from the other place), called the Prince's, and situated conveniently near to Piccadilly, Pall Mall, the Haymarket, and Regent Street. Outside the doorway of this place stood a man with a dark

complexion and a black beard, who held a pug puppy under his coat, and led a poodle and a dachshund by a string.

Something about the leader of this scratch pack seemed familiar to Harry, though he could not quite succeed in 'placing' him. However, he passed in without thinking any more about it, and ordered a liqueur-glass of cognac to be mingled in a long tumbler with a bottleful of Apollinaris water and a lump of ice. As he gave the order, he glanced at the young lady who took it, and was startled. She also glanced at him, and turned quite pale, and her eyes got large and alarmed, as if she had seen some dreadful thing. It was his old acquaintance, Eva Lee.

'Ah, I have found you at last,' he said. 'How on earth did you get here?'

'I can't talk to you about it now,' she replied in

a low voice; 'I'll tell you another time. Number 5 bitter off!' she added in a louder tone and a different direction.

Harry thought she looked improved, and the neatly-made black dress with the white collar and cuffs became her.

Of course there were numerous customers present, and among others a little group, or, more properly, gang of betting-men, sharpers, and 'fighting-men's backers,' if such a profession be recognisable to the cultured mind which reads this story.

The particular 'stand,' as the division of the bar is technically called, at which Miss Lee served, happened to be surrounded by these 'flash coves,' as they would once have been called, and they were in offensively high spirits on this particular occasion, owing to some 'good thing' which had,

apparently, 'come off right' the day before. One, with a drab loose overcoat with very large buttons, and very yellow boots, was exceptionally offensive, and in a minute or two his facetiousness took the favourite and admirable form of saying things of which the sole point, of course, was that they ought not to have been said to the girl, or, indeed, to anyone at all. The immediate result of this was that Miss Lee turned very red and walked away and talked to the girl at the next stand, and that Harry turned to the man, and said:

'If you don't shut up that sort of thing, I'll punch your head.'

'Look 'ere, what the blank, stroke and dash 'ave that got to do with you?'

'What it would have to do with any other fairly decent man—not to say gentleman—who was unfortunate enough to stand near you.'

Here a tall, dark, dry man, from Harry's other side, advanced and said:

'And I beg to add that I enterten precizely semullar opinions to this gentleman,' pointing to Harry, 'and am ready and willing to enfforce them in a mahner semullar to that endicated by hem on you, or any of you.'

Loud obscenity and blasphemy from the gang. Sensation. Crowd of customers rapidly collecting from the upper bar. Manager of the place seen in the distance with an anxious expression. Warlike proceedings apparently imminent. In and through the midst of this advances, with the silent serenity of a well-nourished elephant, ex-Sergeant-Major Fitzgerald, who keeps the gate, in a blue uniform and a little peaked cap, worn in a dandified French manner. This portent bears down with the 'irresistible force of a glacier' on the big-button

man, and urges him persuasively towards the door, and thence to the exterior pavement. A calm is established.

'I am very much obliged to you,' said Harry to the tall Scotchman.

'Not at all. I should have spoken sooner. What will ye tak' to drenk?'

'Oh, thanks—well, I was just having a brandy and Apollinaris.'

'Ye'd better leave that wersh stuff and have a good dram. However, maybe, you are better as you are. I'm too old and copperlined to care what prepohsterous times and quantities I take whisky in. I mind the time fine, too, when I did what you were for doing just now. I was, maybe, your own age or less, and the consequences were—well, let that rest. A'm getting a gahrulous auld man, A'm A noht, missie?'

Eva Lee looked at him with some kindness in her dark eyes, and said :

'You're quite old enough to know better than to get into mischief.'

'Mischief? Maybe I ahm. But I've been in mischief of different sorts for so many years that its harrd to cease.'

'You are a soldier, I should say, are you not?' said Harry.

'Aye, well, you may say that. My name's Macgregor.'

'Oh, thanks! My name's Long.'

'And you know Miss Lee here? Man, you're not the son of the man who was——' exclaimed Macgregor, clutching Harry's arm and speaking in an eager undertone, as he glanced at Harry's black suit and the band on his tall hat.

'I am,' said Harry.

'Ma boy, I'm sorry, very sorry for ye! I was staying at Vane's; you know Pat Vane, do you not, of Crowhill?'

'Yes.'

Macgregor continued to look straight before him into space, apparently engaged in deep thought. Suddenly he took up his glass, and said to Harry very gravely and courteously, slightly lifting his hat:

'You will permit me, surr? I drink—God rest his soul! And so much as my prayers are worth he shall have.'

Harry, who had quite imagination enough to fall into the spirit of the thing, and to see that the Highlander was perfectly serious, lifted his hat and said, 'Thank you.' Then, by some impulse, he held out his hand, and General Ronald Macgregor clasped it hard with his brawny, wiry,

hairy paw. Then Macgregor fetched out a card-case and handed a card to Harry, with 'Brigadier-General Ronald Macgregor, Estada Mayor, Eldorado,' on it, and said: 'That's me.' Harry took it up, and gave his own, 'Sir Henry Long, Lowcliff.'

'Won't you take some lunch with me, General Macgregor?' said Harry.

'I thank ye, I've an appointment, which I must go now and keep. But I'll take a glass with ye with pleasure, Surr Hinry. Maybe I'll get seeing you here again, later in the day.'

When General Macgregor had gone away, Harry turned to Eva Lee, and said:

'How can I have a little conversation with you without all this publicity and——'

'Two stout, one beeta, miss, pleace!' called out an alien waiter with a tray, putting down two or

three dirty tankards with a crash on the marble counter.

'Two stout and one bitter, there you are,' replied Miss Lee, after pulling down the engine handles. 'Where's your check?'

'There you are, miss;' and he threw two coloured tickets on the counter, which Miss Lee tore slightly, and dropped into a sort of wooden missionary-box on the ledge behind her.

Then a customer came, a dull but civil roisterer, who said:

'Well, 'ow are you to-day?'

'Pretty well, thanks.'

'Pretty and well, eh? Well, I'll 'ave a little droppascotch, please, maddumersell. I say, Bob bin yer?'

'No.'

'Or Cholley?'

'I don't think so.'

'Ow! that's cur'ous. I say, you know what I tole you yes'day, 'bout Cholley and Lummy?'

'Yes.'

'Well, it's off.'

'That's all right.'

Then the man paid, and Miss Lee had to go and get a sovereign changed for him at a machine up in the middle of the bar behind the Bovril stand. By the time this was all done, Harry was able to finish his sentence:

'How can I see you where these interruptions don't occur?'

'I'm off at two. I'll meet you in the Opera Colonnade at twenty past. I want to speak to you, Mr.—Sir Henry Long.'

'All right. Then we'll have some lunch.'

'Thanks. I shall be very pleased. We dine

here at half-past two, so it will come in just right.'

'I say, do you know Bob and Charley, and all the people that bounder was talking about?'

'Not the least. But if I didn't answer as if I did, he'd tell me all about them, and that would keep him twice as long. See?'

'Yes. I see you have picked up some experience.'

'Experience! I should think I had. I'm quite a woman of the world now.'

'Really?'

Here the stately foreign manager already alluded to strolled up, smiled a smile that would have been satanic if his face had been less fat, and said:

'Well, Cheepsy, I weell 'ave a small class of pranty and peach peters,' and he held up and

twirled a glass to see if it were properly washed.

And having had his little glass, he strolled away with his hands in his pockets, humming a little tune, his head slightly on one side, seemingly well pleased with himself.

Then Miss Something-or-other, the manageress, came down with a book and a pencil and 'took the tills' (*i.e.*, registered the takings), and so the time dribbled away till two, when the relief-guard came and Miss Lee departed.

Harry then left, and wandered about Pall Mall till 2.15, when he entered the colonnade of her Majesty's Theatre, and paced up and down like a sentinel until Miss Lee appeared, ten minutes late.

'Have you been here long?' said she.

'Not very. Now, where shall we go?'

'Oh, where you like.'

Harry had not Shaw's wide knowledge of London and its possibilities. He knew little beyond the beaten track submissively paced by his University friends, so he took a cab and went with Eva Lee to the Café Royal in Regent Street, where they lunched. During that meal he said:

'And now will you tell me why you didn't keep that appointment by the stile, where I was to bring you some books, weeks and weeks ago?'

'That's what I want to tell you. I was afraid at that time that my father did—you know what, and that I should never be able to look in your face again. But I have since been convinced that he did not, and you have no idea how much happier it's made me. Father and I ran away from Star-mouth. I went because I felt I couldn't stay, and he went because the police were after him.

Then General Macgregor, the gentleman you were talking to just now, got me a situation, and while I was there I heard there was a vacancy where I am now, and I went and called at the office and they took me on, and there I am. That's my story, put shortly.'

'But—excuse the question—why did your father take such a false step as to run away? It makes people assume naturally—I don't say *I* assume anything, mind you——'

'Sir Henry Long, you are a perfect gentleman, and you have always been very kind to me. Can I trust you with a secret?'

'I hope so.'

'If father had let himself be examined and asked questions, he was afraid that they might get at a lot of other things and people that had nothing to do with what he was suspected of.

There's a political conspiracy—I don't quite know what it's all about, but something to do with Ireland—and we're in it in a sort of way. I can't tell you any more now, and I trust to your promise to keep it to yourself.'

'Oh well, I'm a sympathiser with Ireland, if that's all. You're safe enough with me, Miss Lee. But I hope you are not putting yourself in any danger. Because you're not Irish, you know, even. There's no excuse.'

'Oh no; I know nothing about it. I only pass a message sometimes, which I generally don't know the meaning of. I'm all right.'

'Well, this is queer, certainly.'

'You see, when father was soldiering abroad, he got mixed up with these people—Mr. Vane's one. I must tell you that, because they used to take you all in so.'

'Vane! I thought he was a strong Tory?'

'Yes, you were meant to think so. Well, father was with Mr. Vane and some others when they began plotting this business out in America somewhere.'

'I remember, now, something of this being said to me. But Mrs. Vane, has *she* anything to do with it?'

'Just as much as the rest. She's worse; she's not a nice woman at all. She carries on with every gentleman who comes to the house—and a good many do—and Mr. Vane's so good-hearted, and trusts her so much, he doesn't see it. Father knows.'

Harry held his tongue and pondered. Surely this girl was indirectly telling him what a fool he had been, and the worst of it was that he felt it to be true. At last he said, rather in reply to his own thoughts than to her:

'Ah, well, I'm wiser and older now. Let's talk about something else.'

And they talked—oh, as a young man and a maiden who have a growing interest in one another, and are young and fairly good-looking, always do talk. It has been done over and over again, and will be done numberless times more, let us hope, as long as the earth rotates, and until its whole population is ruled by a gigantic County Council, who will prohibit love, as well as cakes and ale and song and wine, under penalties.

But I should not be justified in repeating the conversation. The reader probably can fill it all in from memory — good memory, too, on the whole, isn't it?

At last Eva said:

'I must go now; I've got to be back by half-

past five to change, and go on at six. Will you come in then?'

'Very well.'

'Don't come in before.'

'Why not?'

'I don't want you to go to anybody else's stand.'

'Oh, when can I see you again?'

'Well, the duty's changed to-morrow. I am off till two, and on from two till six.'

'Very well; we'll call it breakfast instead of lunch. What time will suit you?'

'I'll be in the colonnade at half-past ten.'

Harry paid the bill, and they rose to go. As Eva stood arranging her veil and buttoning her gloves before the gilt-framed glass, Harry thought what a difference there was between this neat and lady-like young woman in the well-made black frock, the

rather stylish black lace hat with yellow roses in it, the moiré sunshade, the long suède gloves (which she was buttoning with a hairpin), and the irreproachable boots, and the unkempt and untidy gipsy girl he had caught in the act of stealing a rabbit! And yet she was somehow the same—the same in her sensitive feelings and her superior sibyllic knowledge of things affecting his destiny; the same in her evident respect and liking for himself, and her total absence of affectation and what is called swagger. And he thought for the second and last time that this was real and true, and that Mrs. Vane was unreal and false.

There's something in going to consult one's solicitor, after all.

CHAPTER X.

A LITTLE STRATEGY.

When General Macgregor left the Prince's buffet he turned to the right, and walked on, giving an imperceptible nod and wink as he passed to the dog-man, who was no other than our friend Lee, in somewhat reduced circumstances, though in his get-up the reduced circumstances were perhaps a little over-displayed. This man hurried after the General as if to beg, and call his attention to the pug puppy. Mac saw at once that some communication was intended, and slackened his pace a little.

'Buy a little dawg, Capten? *There's a baulo* opry the drom behind you.* Beautiful dawg this, sir; give you 'is pedigree, got it written out, sir. *Got a brown tweed suit and black bowler.* Bring 'im to your chambers, sir? 'Ave 'im for a fortnit on approval? *Lookin' in the boot-shop winder now.* Thank ye, sir!'

And Lee shuffled off with his puppy and his poodle and his dachshund.

Of the above sentences, those in italics were in a much lower tone than the others. Cool, strategic old Mac 'spotted' the man who was 'shadowing' him in the twinkling of an eye, and decided he would give that man some amusement. He was about to start for a long walk through London, just to give the 'shadow' a little exercise, when he reflected that if he were being watched, it implied

* Constable on the road.

that the authorities knew where he lived—which was at present in one of Katey Hynes's attics—and might be using him to trace one or more of his confederates, in which case the sooner he warned the latter the better for general safety. Wherefore the first necessary step was to get rid of his follower. So Mac walked at a leisurely pace along Pall Mall, and turned into St. James's Park between Marlborough House and the Palace of St. James. There he walked along till he saw a single solitary hansom cab. Seeing first that there was no other empty cab within the immediate view, he jumped into this, and told the man to drive to Victoria, L. B. and S. C. station, and to look sharp.

When he was deposited there he went at once into the subway leading to the Metropolitan station, and waited a second to see if he was

followed there. Seeing not his pursuer, he took a ticket to Baker Street, and hurried down the steps. A train was just starting, for which he was too late. In any case, it would not have taken him to his destination. The next train would be an Inner Circle one, and he had to wait. This was trying, for no doubt the 'shadow' had run after the cab, and was making inquiries outside the station at that moment. However, the train came, and Mac got into it, and wished it would go on. He leaned back in his solitary first-class compartment, and drew the blind at his side, just allowing a narrow place to spy through. The guard waved a green flag with a white diamond on it, and someone said, 'Ri' way!' and the train began to move. Just then the man who had followed him came running down the steps, and reached the bottom just as the man there whose

business it was to look at tickets and answer questions slammed the gate to, and imperturbably turned his back to it. General Macgregor put his feet on the seat in front of him and chuckled.

'Now, will that pairson wire along the Inner Circle to have me shadowed again? He can't. No one could identify me, and they can't stop me without bringing a charge. And even if they had a charge ready it would spoil their game. They are using me to lead them either to Mike Doherty or to Pohlmann, and I think I am leading them fine.'

At each station, however, he had a good look up and down the platform, for the detective might have driven in a cab to Baker Street or elsewhere on the chance of getting there before the train—the route round from Victoria by Bayswater and

Edgware Road being circuitous and long—supposing he had ascertained whither Macgregor had booked, which was very likely.

At Baker Street he did not get out, for, lo! there on the platform stood the 'shadow' eagerly scanning each compartment as the train drew up, and the passengers as they alighted. He walked quickly all along the train, peering into each carriage, sometimes even opening the door. For once in the world there was someone who was thankful for the atmosphere of Baker Street Station, which obscured the windows with a kind of opaque dew, for Mac dared not draw the blind. That would invite attention. But he lay on the floor, and prayed for the train to go on. The detective had paid most attention to the long row of third-class compartments, so that when he came to the firsts (which were situated between the seconds and the

thirds), he was in a hurry to get to the populous seconds beyond. He looked in at the dim window of the compartment where Mac lay on the floor, and seeing no one was apparently present, did not think of opening the door, but hurried on. In the meantime the train started, and Mac was safe at last.

'Bless that fellow!' he murmured, as he rose up and dusted himself. 'He must have driven like the wind up Grosvenor Place, Park Lane, and Baker Street. But he got left this time, the swine! It takes a good many people to caircumvent an old soldier I am acquented wuth.'

He alighted at Portland Road and paid the excess on his ticket cheerfully, and took a Waterloo 'bus up Albany Street. There was no shadow about this time, and Mac lighted his old wooden pipe and smoked it on the top of the 'bus

with the dry inscrutable serenity of an Indian, scrutinizing gravely the sentry at the barracks as they passed. When the vehicle stopped at the York and Albany, he got down and walked into that hostelry, where he took a glass of whisky, feeling that his recent adventure and its success entitled him to a 'dram.' The proceeding also had the effect (probably contemplated by our friend) of not letting the conductor of the 'bus know where he was going, as that conveyance drove away while Mac was in the tavern. Having finished his refreshment in perfect silence, for he did not wish it to become known that a Highland gentleman of pedigree had been betrayed by his speech there, Mac went round to a modestly retiring house, standing at the end of a gloomy grass-plot, up some steep steps, in Delancey Street, where he knocked at the door.

It was opened by Captain Mike Doherty in person, and in his shirt-sleeves, who was lodging there.

'The woman of the house is gone out to fetch me my dinner-beer, and the girl's minding the baby, so I tould her I'd answer the door. It's a pretty child, and she's taken to me. She's just after learning to talk, and calls me "Beeman"—that means Beerman, I understand.'

And Doherty showed Macgregor into a little sitting-room, where a table was spread with cold boiled beef, pickles, bread and cheese.

'You'll take some dinner, Mac?'

'Aye; I think I will. Mike, I got seeing a young man to-day who is the son of that old man down at the sea-side whom an accident happened to.'

'The devil you did!'

'Aye. And, man, I've done a loht of queerish transahctions of my own, Lord forgive me! but he's a fine brave boy, and I was sorry for him, and for it all.'

And Macgregor told the story of Harry Long's chivalrous interposition at the Prince's.

Doherty said:

'You couldn't be sorrier than I am. It's been on my heart ever since. I came here to make war, not to do murder. It's done now, and can't be undone, and the obstinate old man would have lost me the train and run me in to the pollis-barrack as well if I hadn't resisted. The saints know I didn't wish to kill um. I'll have Masses said for his soul. Hope someone will do as much for me some day. I wish it had been that thief of the world Stevens instead.'

'A'm wondering what's become of *hem*.'

'So am I. Ah, here's the beer.—Thank ye kindly, Mrs. McShane.—Now, Mac, take my knife and fork and wade in. Mrs. McShane will bring me another, I make no doubt.'

'Indeed I will, Mr. Barry.'

This was Mike's last alias. Mrs. McShane had been recommended by Mrs. Hynes, of the White Lion, and knew vaguely that Mr. Barry was a 'tall clever boy from America,' who must not be made a subject of external gossip unless of a misleading character.

'I hope that Stevens man has given us up as a bad job, since I left the White Lion and made a hare of little Keogh.'

'I hope he has; but there was a man shadowing me to-day, only fortunately I was able to get rid of him.'

And Mac told his adventures.

'This is getting warm. See now, Mac, I'll tell you what we'll have to do. This Government's getting to think itself clever, though any house of business run on the lines of the British Constitution would land itself in bankruptcy in no time at all. They'll be stumbling on some informer or something one of these days, and give themselves the credit of finding out what he tells um. It's an everlasting mercy we've had no informers in our crowd up to now. Nearly every good thing in the past has been blown on by informers!'

'The informer has not subsequently prospered as a rule.'

'Well, no, and bad may their ends all be! I don't count Stevens as an informer. He's a Government spy, and much the same as a pollisman. It's a queer thing, this English political business; you see the Radical and the Consorvatuv

M.P. just putting his immortal soul up to auction for the sake of votes. Patriotism! That's all skittles. The politicians want offus, and the people are possessed of a stupid, narrow, short-sighted egoism. They want both martial spirrut and civul disciplun. Put the fleet on one side, and they might fight Belgium. Take the Irish and Scotch out of the army and they couldn't do that. As for the volunteers, well, I'll guarantee to find the boys that'll bate *them*.'

'But what are we to do just now?'

'Good old Mac! Like to come to the point, do you not? Well, I have some telegraph forms here. You will kindly take one to the offus, which I think you will find down Park Street. I will write the message at once. It is to fetch up Mrs. Vane to-morrow morning to the Hôtel Capitole. There she shall have further information.'

'Would she be there in her own name?'

'Ah! No; I'll tell her to be Mrs. Barry.'

'I see. Well, give it here, and I'll just mail it.'

'Then come back and arrange more. Here's the latch-key. Don't lose it now!' said Mike facetiously, as the tall gaunt form of General Macgregor strode across the dingy patch of grass and disappeared to the left.

When he returned, he said that all was well; and Mike Doherty said:

'Well, now for our plans. Of course, Mrs. V. is to meet Pohlmann somewhere and take his baggage as her own down to Crowhill. They'll never suspect her or think of making a raid on Crowhill when the big chiefs, the bully boys with glass eyes and humming bugs like us, are all in London. Having once got those blessed contrap-

tions of his out of town and up into the Crowhill laboratory, we can let them shadow us about London as much as ever they like. Oh, we'll give 'em some gentle exercise! In the meantime, how and where is Pohlmann to meet her, and how are we to communicate with her?'

'I might call for her at the hotel.'

'No; you're a bit conspicuous, Mac, and you'd have to go down into parts haunted by the C Division, and to the very back-door almost of Scotland Yard. Someone would recognise you, and you'd be watched. It must be somebody not known by sight, somebody unlikely to attract little Keogh's attention, somebody who needn't even know what he's doing. Just to ask for the lady and deliver a note. That's all. A street-loafer would do, if you could trust him.'

'I know fine how to work that. Lee's daughter.

She dresses neatly, and might be either a friend or a young pairson from the milliner's. She would take the note. I could give it to her to-night. It would not matter much whether I was spotted or no.'

'Good for you! Lee's daughter — that's it. Now, what are we to put in that note?'

'Call at Pohlmann's lodgings?'

'I don't like writing the address. Suppose Miss Lee lost the letter, or got run over, or pocket-picked, or something, and it came out?'

'Meet at station?'

'Better, only we must in that case communicate with Pohlmann at once, and see that his coast is clear.'

'I'll do that. I'm not known by sight in that part—I'll go to-night.'

'Very well. Now for the A, B, C. We must

have it as dark as possible when they do it. They'd better meet on the departure platform at Waterloo, at the bookstall, at 9 p.m. That will give them plenty of time to catch the train which starts at 9.15. They are to be at the bookstall at nine precisely by the station clock.'

'The bookstall will be closed.'

'Never mind. They are to be *there*. She will recognise him by the old signs, and he her by the same. He is to have his luggage ready labelled for Shervil—you write down all the names and things he'd be likely to misunderstand or forget for him—and to have her name on it—Mrs. Vane, not Mrs. Barry; that will help break the connection. Besides, the people down at Shervil will be sure to get reading the label, and it would look bad to have a wrong name. When she leaves the Capitole, she must leave it ostentatiously, in a cab, and go to

Charing Cross, under pretext of catching the evening mail for Pahrus. There she can amuse herself taking a cup of tea, or a glass of wine, or reading a paper or something, or cloak-room her things and go for a walk, until about twenty minutes to nine. Then she must take the train for Waterloo Junction, go in to the main station and watch the clock, and be at that bookstall not a minute sooner or later than nine.

'This is not a case of meeting a sweetheart who can be let wait awhile to teach um patience. This is business. All this I'll write to her, and you'll explain to Pohlmann. You speak his lingo, so you must beat it all into his little Teutonuck head, and make um understand right down through. See that?'

'Ay; I'll see to it, sir,' replied Macgregor, in the tone of one addressing officially a superior

officer with whom he was unofficially on familiar terms.

'That's all right, then,' said Doherty, taking a long draught of beer and passing the jug to Macgregor.

The latter said:

'How did you contrive to evade the minion of the law in Old Compton Street, Mike? I was asleep, and never knew of it till Mrs. Hynes told me you and Pohlmann were away.'

'First of all it became evident that the place was being watched, not only because little Stevens came in, but because some of the boys recognised Mr. Keogh, the pollis inspector. Then we arranged where we were to go to, and had a four-wheeled hack convenient in Wardour Street, at the entrance of a court leading from it to Dean Street at 6 a.m. We got Pohlmann and his box into this when he

and I had got out at the back of the White Lion into the court, and before the peeler in plain clothes had quite realized what was up, I had pasted a bit of brown paper over the number back of the hack, and we both got in and drove off. Of course, at that time of day there was no other cab to be got to follow us in. In case of the driver being advertised for and asked questions of, we just drove to Victoria Station, where we took the cars for Brixton. There we took the box out of the depot ourselves and walked to the address where Pohlmann now is, and the little Dutchman got rather short-winded with the weight of his luggage, so as I am a strong sort of man I took it all on my shoulders for um, as if I was a man he'd engaged for the job, and carried it upstairs for um at 19, Montfort Place, Kennington Road. I'd had a good strategic study of the map of London forst, so I

did not have to ask anyone the way. The house is kept by a German of like feelings with Pohlmann, so they're pigging together on ham and sausage, which I've no doubt they keep in their bedrooms mixed up with collars and ties in the chest of drawers. Then I took a street-car up to Westminster Bridge, and walked to where I am now. Katey Hynes sent a boy—her own boy—with my bag done up in brown paper, and the peelers never thought of following him. In fact, I should have thought they'd given over watching there except for what you've told me to-day, and they were only shadowing you to find me, which shows they've lost me. I take my exercise here in the dark at present. That's how we made a hare of Mister Keogh.'

'Mike, my bonnie man, it takes more than a London policeman to best old soldiers like you and

me. Pass the matches. But I'm ahnxious to know what Mr. Stevens is doing just now.'

'Oh, hang Stevens!'

And Doherty hummed:

> 'For all their cruel parchment laws
> We care not a thraneen,
> When all our hills and valleys dear
> Are proudly decked in green.
> Oh, Ireland was a grown-up land,
> When England was a pup;
> And Ireland will be Ireland still
> When England's——

But, Mac, I'm sorry I killed that old man. Indeed I am.'

CHAPTER XI.

A MATTER OF SEVENTY-FIVE POUNDS.

Mrs. Vane sat at lunch in the large *table d'hôte* room of the Capitole Hotel, less overpowered than many people by the church-like solemnity of that refectory, which usually constrains quite chirpy, lively and forward people to talk in subdued undertones, probably from that British reverence for the large and expensive which is almost a religion.

But it took a good deal to overpower Mrs. Vane, or to make her feel reverent and subdued. Her temperament was quite proof against the influences which impose respect or evolve awe in ordinary people. She was indeed rather a callous little

woman, I am afraid. When she came to first Communion—some years ago now—she not only wondered what the embroidery on the vestments cost, but whispered her wonder to a shocked young neighbour in the kneeling row. When she was married to Mr. Vane she noticed that his trousers did not fit well. When she found she was going to have a baby she said: 'What a bother!' When it died, she said: 'What a pity!' and sighed with relief, being subsequently entirely consoled by finding that it had not spoilt her figure.

She had, however, a delightfully ingratiating manner which almost convinced the most sceptical that she had deep and sincere feelings (for them at least, if not for others), and was good-looking and stylish enough into the bargain to make that conviction sure.

It was a fine bright day—indeed, there had been

more than the English average of fine bright days lately—and Mrs. Vane, like all other smart ladies, had dressed accordingly, as soon as she and her trunk had been delivered by the elevator to her apartment somewhere in the most bewildering immensities of the hotel. She had recently arrived, according to instructions, inscribed herself in the hotel register as Mrs. Barry from San José, Guano, S.A., and decided, while awaiting further developments, to lunch. She liked nice things, and the *table d'hôte* lunch was fairly good, she thought, for an English hotel, and she ordered a pint of champagne, thinking that, if she was expected to run errands and risks for the Cause, she would make the Cause pay for it. Truth to tell, she was a trifle weary of the Cause.

To her there walked in a well-dressed, polite little man with a black spiked moustache, called

Stevens, who had a telegram in his pocket running thus: 'Am seeing off Mrs. V. by early train to town. Shaw,' and addressed to 'Edmund Stevens, Muller's Private Hotel, York Road.'

Now, she knew that Stevens was an enemy, and a formidable enemy, to the Cause, wherefore her perverse little mind insisted on giving him a cordial greeting, and asking him to sit at her table. What she exactly meant is very doubtful. It is possible that she did not know herself. In any case he was a presentable, clever and agreeable man, who had always appreciated her, and if she should derive any hint from him that she was putting herself into actual danger, why, the Cause might go to the mischief, along with the great coarse, stupid, whisky-drinking men who promoted it, and had often been, since the first excitement and novelty wore off, such a frequent and un-

speakable bore to her. After all, what did she care about Ireland? She had been taken there once, thought Dublin a dreary provincial town where it rained, and found the west, with its mountains, peat-bogs, stone walls and bare-footed women with shawls over their heads, and long car-drives, perfectly insupportable. And when she at last found a really nice young gentleman in a neat uniform to talk to in a dingy and desolate hotel in Galway, she was lectured and prohibited, not because her husband was jealous—oh no! he had not the sense—but because the young gentleman was a District Inspector forsooth, and therefore what Vane called a 'mormadon' of the English Government. No; on the whole the Cause was becoming *vieux jeu*, and she liked London a great deal better than fifty Irelands. She liked to feel and hear her heels on a good

wide smooth pavement, to look at shops, to go to theatres and select restaurants, and now she had got away from the stupid old house of Crowhill, and her kindly but deadly tiresome husband, and that stupid boy who was in love with her but had not the civility (or perhaps the courage) to tell her so, and that exasperating man who was *not* in love with her, but ought to be, she meant to have a regular good holiday and a thoroughly good time, Cause or no Cause. So she was very pleasant to Mr. Stevens. Some call this hedging.

While they were conversing, a young lady, dark, pretty, neatly dressed in black, was conducted to 'Mrs. Barry' by a uniformed porter of the hotel. The young lady laid a note upon the table, and said:

'I beg your pardon, but I was asked to give you this.'

'Won't you sit down?' said Mrs. Vane pleasantly.

'No, thank you; I can't wait.'

And she scanned Mrs. Vane's face, pretty summer costume, ringed slender hands, and general appearance with calm severity, for she was Eva Lee, and knew well that this was the woman who 'carried on,' as the popular expression goes, with sundry gentlemen, more particularly with one Harry Long, in whom she, Eva Lee, took a personal interest. And then she went away, with an upright gait and a calm haughtiness of expression which was perhaps a trifle overdone, to join the same Harry Long, who was sitting in a hansom outside the hotel door. They had been out to breakfast, and were now on the way to the back entrance of the Prince's, but Eva had told him she had a note to deliver at the Capitole, and they had taken it on

the way. Eva thought as she climbed into the hansom: 'She *is* pretty, but I don't think much of her. I shan't tell Harry who I've seen, or he might go back to call while I'm washing glasses, and won't know where he is. You never know what men won't do.'

Mr. Stevens looked at the note which lay beside Mrs. Vane's wine-glasses and bread, on her right. She was sitting opposite to him, and he read the address upside down without much difficulty: 'Mrs. Barry, Capitole Hotel.' Then he took a leather pocket-book from his inside breast-pocket —he wore a black morning coat—and produced a bank-note for fifty pounds. This he held in his left hand.

'Mrs. Barry,' he said, 'I will give you fifty pounds for that note.'

She drew herself up and opened her eyes.

'Oh, do not talk absurdly.'

'I will give you this Bank of England note for fifty pounds with my left hand at the moment when you put that note into my right. You can get many pretty and useful things with fifty pounds.'

Mrs. Vane looked shy and sly.

'It is only a bill from the dressmaker.'

'I know. I am offering to pay it, you see.'

'Do you really think it is worth fifty pounds?'

Shyness predominant.

'That is my risk.'

'I think, Mr. Stevens, that it is worth much more. I do not think fifty pounds will pay this bill,' shaking it gently, and looking down at her fingers.

'I do.'

'I am sure it will not be under one hundred pounds.'

'I doubt if it is worth all I have offered. I beg to inform you that fifty pounds is really a very handsome tender, and I cannot conscientiously increase it.'

'Ah! but afterwards?' head on one side, pensive.

'I will see to that. You will be safe.'

'And if I do not give it you at all?' smiling archly.

'Then I am afraid I shall have to take it, and if there was a noise, and a nasty police-case, with Miss Eva Lee and her promising old papa in the witness-box, and it came out that you were staying here with a false name and address, and corresponding with compromising people, I don't

think you would like it. Hadn't we better be pleasant?'

Mrs. Vane replied without any affectation:

'I will tell you something, Mr. Stevens. You are the first person I was ever afraid of, and consequently the only person I have ever respected. Now, be pleasant, and give me seventy-five pounds, and you shall have the note, and anything I can tell you about this stupid, stupid old conspiracy also.'

'Very well.'

And Stevens extracted more notes from the pocket-book.

'Here!' said Mrs. Vane quietly, holding out the note.

Stevens took it and put it in his pocket.

'Thanks!' he said. 'I knew we should end by agreeing. I could always see that your natural

gifts and refined taste compelled you to dislike and despise the petty little network of inefficient conspiracy which accident had cast round you.'

'Tell me, suppose I had torn up that note with one hand while I took the money. You would have been a little—sold, yes?'

'No. There would only have been the trouble of putting the pieces together. Of course, if you had irrecoverably destroyed it—which you had no means of doing, as there is no fire, and the windows are too far off—it would have been much the same as if you had refused to give it, a nasty police-case, with the additional item that you would be charged with stealing my money as well.'

'Tell me again, if I am so much in your power as all that, why do you offer me a bargain at all? Why did you not simply arrest me? It would be cheaper.'

'Because you can give me really useful information, and, if I may add it without offence, because I admire you a great deal too much to willingly make things uncomfortable for you.'

'Thank you. Of course, nothing of consequence will happen to any of my friends. I should regret to be the means of causing them serious trouble.'

'Of course; we need not discuss that. Mr. Vane is quite safe at present, I believe, though it is doubtful if he would have remained so much longer. That I can tell you, without hesitation.'

'Oh, let us talk about something more interesting.'

'We will begin by reading this note. Ha! it appears that you are to go to-night to Waterloo Station, to be at the bookstall at nine precisely

by the station clock, in readiness to meet a gentleman, a foreigner, who will recognise you by the customary signs. This sort of thing, I suppose?'

'Yes, yes.'

'He will give his luggage into your charge, ready labelled for Shervil, and you will take it away at once by the 9.15 train, wiring to Vane to send a fly to meet you. Very pretty indeed.'

'And I to go back, when I have just come, and not seen one shop, one theatre! Oh, these men and their plots are too ridiculous! I should not have gone in any case. Will you take me to a theatre to-night, Mr. Stevens?'

'Well, yes; I don't mind. I will come and fetch you at—what time?'

'I will make them get me tickets at the hotel.

For something amusing. Come and dine with me at seven.'

'Very well. I may have to leave you for a little while in the course of the performance, but I shan't be long. *Pooro Beng!* I forgot Miss Lee. I believe she knows me. I must go and see if she's on duty, and if she gives anyone the office. I must be off, madam, at once, I regret to say.'

'You will not forget to come back?'

'How could I? But I have one or two things to see to this afternoon. For the present, good-bye.'

'*À tantôt.*'

And Mrs. Vane nodded amicably as she crushed the notes into the bosom of her frock.

'Now, I like that woman,' thought Stevens as he walked quickly along Northumberland Avenue towards Trafalgar Square; 'there's a calm cheek

about her which is taking, and I believe she is perfectly sincere when she says she only respects people she is afraid of, and that I'm the one. As I shall most undoubtedly have to take care of her, considerable care, in the future, I had better make up my mind to like her now.'

Then he went and had a very thorough look at the Prince's, where Miss Lee was not visible, and ended by placing himself at the upper end of the long bar-room in a recess at a table with a newspaper, where he smoked and sipped coffee, and could see all down the room as far as the door. His aim was partly to watch, and partly to formulate a plan. The note written by Doherty, and signed by his initials, and conveyed by Eva Lee, had no address, and Stevens and the police had been unable to find the present whereabouts of Doherty, or of the little German supposed to be

one Pohlmann of Chicago. Doherty was not such a fool as to come to the Prince's himself. The note might have been carried by any hand—perhaps by a boy or girl—as far as Miss Lee. It might even have been enclosed to her by post, but it was more likely to have been sent by hand.

That odd person, General Macgregor, lived in an upper room at the White Lion, and made no disguise about it, but it was in vain that he had been tracked and 'shadowed.' He was a very wary old bird, and used to put the 'shadow' to so much trouble and expense that it seemed beyond doubt that the General had ways of becoming aware that he was being watched. Once he had gone into a public-house which was known both by himself and the follower to have two exits into different streets. The follower was therefore constrained to follow him inside for fear of losing him, and, being

inside, had to order something. Macgregor soon entered into casual conversation with him, and in the long-run so filled that follower up with whisky that he could not read the number of a cab. In the meantime, Mac entered a hansom with unaltered gravity, and a little twinkle in his eye, and told the driver to go slowly round St. James's Park. The follower fell into another hansom, shouted something unintelligible through the trap-door, and was soon fast asleep, with his head limply bent forward, and his body sunk down on the seat. The cabman delivered him at the nearest police-station.

'Yes; he's tricky, very,' reflected Stevens. 'I must see if I can't best him; I'm fairly tricky, too. I wonder who that young gentleman is? Surely I've seen him somewhere. Let me see. Got it—young gentleman in canoe at Starmouth.

In mourning, too. Mr. Shaw's young friend, the son of the baronet who got put out of the way by —now, was it Lee or Doherty? I've asked Lee, and put the bindingest Romany oaths on him, and he only says he didn't do it, and is not acquainted with the man who did. Now, Lee is, of course, an old liar, but I don't think he did it, though, if so, he knows that Doherty did. If I could only get at one or two of them off their guard, by drink or eavesdropping, I'd bottle somebody for murder as well as treason-felony. It's a pity if I haven't brains enough not to be given away by a second-class gang like this. Wonder what that young gentleman's here for? Not one of the girls, for he doesn't talk to them. Waiting about for someone; some pal of his own, I dare say. Ah! what's this? Old Macgregor, *pau mi deari Doovel!** and

* By my dear Lord!

my young gentleman going to talk to that *pooro Bengesko sap!** Now, what's the little game, I wonder? This must be attended to.'

And he held up his newspaper, in which he had made a hole.

* Old seed of the devil.

CHAPTER XII.

'GO WHILE THE DOOR IS OPEN.'

When Harry Long had delivered Eva up at the back entrance of the Prince's, and seen her skirts disappear up the marble stairs which led into the regions near the sky inhabited by the staff of that establishment, he went into the buffet, still fairly crowded with men lunching, and men who had been lunching, where he dawdled about for a little while, till two o'clock, when the relief was due behind the counter. At that time, however, Eva appeared, only to say:

'Look here, I'm sorry, but the duty's changed.'

'Oh, blow the duty! Again?'

'Yes; I'll tell you if you'll listen, but I can't stop. General Macgregor is sure to come in this afternoon sometime, but I shan't be here. We're short, because Miss Watson's been taken ill, and I have got to go to the theatre *matinée* instead of her, so I shan't see him, and I want you to give him a message. Here! take a bit of block and write it down: "Stevens was lunching with her." That's all. Will you be sure to do it?'

'All right.'

'I'm much obliged. Good-bye. No, mustn't shake hands across the counter; only manageresses can shake hands and wear flowers here.'

So Miss Lee went away to the stalls refreshment-bar in the theatre next door, which the Prince's people catered for, where there was a *matinée* on that particular day, while Harry loitered about the buffet and felt rather sold.

After a time General Macgregor appeared, greeted Harry Long kindly enough — they had met once already since the first occasion of their acquaintance—and ordered the inevitable Dundee whisky. Harry said to him in a cautious voice:

'Miss Lee is unexpectedly put on duty in the theatre, but she gave me a message for you.'

'The devil she did!'

'You may think it was rash of her, but she had no other way, you see, of letting you know at once; that is, if time were any object. Besides, I hope you will accept my word that I would not betray anyone's confidence who trusted me, least of all hers. Besides, I don't the least understand the message.'

'Well, well, ye're a good lad, and an honest

gentleman, and she might trust worse people. What's the message?'

'She delivered a note at the Capitole. I was with her; at least, I didn't go in, but waited in the cab outside—she asked me to stay outside—and then we drove back here, and she just had time to tell me after she found out the duty was different, and therefore couldn't see you personally as she had expected. So I was to tell you this: "Stevens was lunching with her." I don't understand who Stevens is, or who "her" is, or what it's all about, don't you know, but I've repeated the message faithfully.'

Macgregor opened his eyes very wide, and made a face.

'This is a serious matter, Sir Henry, more so than you imagine. I must think what is to be done.'

'Can I assist you in any way?'

'You? Man, you don't know what you're talking about!'

'Perhaps I know, or guess, more than you think.'

'What do you know, then?' inquired Macgregor dryly.

'Would I be far wrong in suggesting that you and Mr. Vane and Mr. Lee and a few other people are interested in a certain movement? That some little details of your arrangements do not strictly adhere to limits laid down by statutes—more especially the statute of treason-felony? And that information recently received has led you to suppose that—that there is a leak somewhere in the boiler, so to speak, likely to endanger the movement?'

'Ay, and not unlikely to jerk up the people who

run the machine sky high. I see. This comes of letting lasses into secrets. No, I don't mean you and Miss Lee. She doesn't really know anything worth mentioning, and what she does know it's only natural that she should babble to a certain bonnie lad that she fancies. It's the other I'm thinking of. I hardly can think it possible! There, you'll not betray gentlemen in trouble, I know. My difficulty is this: There is a man in danger of serious trouble—here, come away and sit in this recess. There's a man, A'am saying, whom I wish to warn of serious danger, in consequence of what you have told me—in fact, there are two men, but one of them can warn the other. I will not tell you the nature of the danger, because that would be placing a responsibility on you I would not have you bear. I am being followed and watched, therefore can't go myself. It would

take too long to lose my followers, and I might not succeed in doing so.'

'Couldn't you wire?'

'I should be followed to the telegraph office, and the telegram would be read, and delayed by the police with no more hesitation than your d——d snob of a Government has in opening letters. Surr, if you would walk or drive a certain distance in London, and deliver a brief message, you would save a man's liberty and life, in all human probility—but ma sins! I forgot, you are not the man who should do it either. It's a bad chob all round.'

'Why shouldn't I do it? Look here, General, I ask no questions. How much I may sympathize with a certain Cause I will not say, but it seems to me I may do good all round by preventing some futile act of violence, of which I cannot say I

approve—for, after all, I'm an English gentleman, as well as by getting some poor wrong-headed enthusiast out of a bad hole.'

'Ay, ay, but ye dawn't know. And I'll not tell you,' replied Macgregor gloomily.

'Hear me now,' said Harry; 'I will take your message. You've been kind to me, and you stood by me when I tried to defend a girl I—respect, and I'll do as you wish now, blindfold, so to speak. I'll pull it off all right.'

'Surr, God bless you, and forgive us all our sins! Maybe I should not be doing the things I do myself, but I'm too auld a dog to lairn new tricks. This business is all up, and I'm away with old Lee to-day, if he'll come to Bulgaria. I believe there's a bit of a desturrbance there coming on. Will you do just this: Go to 19, Delancey Street, Regent's Park, near the York and Albany, where the Water-

loo omnibus stops, and ask for Mr. Barry. If there is any hesitation at letting ye in, ask them to tell him the wind's changing, and he'll see you. Then tell him what you've told me, adding that you went at my request, and that he is to use his discretion. Also that I leave this evening for Rotterdam, *viâ* Liverpool Street. Will you do this?'

'Certainly. Shall I come back here?'

'As you please. But not with the object of finding me. You will hear of me at the White Lion in Old Compton Street, Soho. If there is any difficulty made when you inquire there, say again that the wind is changing. Don't say it for all the loafers to hear, for some are informers and some are spies. And now, if ye're going, ma lad, go soon, and I hope ye'll live to be a happy man with bonny children and a warm hearth, and not forget that there are one or two wandering weather-

beaten old wasters about the world without kin or home, who will bless the memory of your name as men once did Flora Macdonald's.'

Harry left the Prince's by the back entrance, and walked as far as Regent Street, where he hailed a hansom, and drove to the York and Albany. He thought it would be as well not to drive right up to the address. Even Harry had that much acumen. But he found it necessary, after wandering down Park Street as far as the Hampstead Road, to inquire where Delancey Street was, and from natural habit, forgetting for the moment the nature of his mission, made that inquiry of a policeman. Then he walked up Park Street again, and eventually succeeded, with the aid of a milkman, in finding his destination.

His heart beat rather violently as he mounted the steep steps to the narrow yellowish-brown front-

door of No. 19, and used the knocker, for he felt he was coming into a presence strange and awe-striking to him, that he was treading on the border of a mysterious and terrible world, of the existence of which he had had hitherto the vaguest conception. When good Mrs. McShane opened the door he asked for Mr. Barry.

'I don't know that he is in, sir. Would you leave any message?'

'Will you kindly see if he is in, and if so, tell him the—er—wind is changing?'

'Ah, sure I will, sir!' After a pause Mrs. McShane returned, saying: 'Mr. Barry will be pleased to see you, sir. Will you step inside? Take care of the mat now! It's a dark place when the door's shut and you're not used to it.' And she opened the second door on the right leading into a back parlour, which was Mr. Barry's

sitting-room, and said: 'The gentleman for you, Mr. Barry.'

Harry found himself in the presence of a tall robust man, between forty and fifty, with a round head and a face something like the caricatures of Bismarck—which he had surely seen before—while Mike Doherty saw, with some surprise, a young gentleman belonging more or less to the 'masher' class, with a fluffy black frock-coat, and a big salmon-coloured carnation, whom he remembered to have seen in flannels in a canoe the day he arrived at Starmouth, for Captain Doherty was not the kind of person who remembers a face but forgets where he last saw it. Doherty bowed, and Harry said:

'You must—er—excuse my calling. You may think it's no business of mine, but I have come straight from General Macgregor. He hadn't any-

one better to send. I was to warn you that something's up. There was a message delivered to-day at the Capitole by a—in fact, lady, with whom I happened to be acquainted, and she said afterwards, "Stevens was lunching with her," and I gave that message to Macgregor. I didn't understand it exactly, don't you know, but I told General Macgregor if I could be useful in the matter, as he seemed rather in a stew, I would be happy to do so, and that I would, of course, respect and forget any confidence put in me. And he was good enough to entrust me with this message to you. You were to use your discretion, and I was to add that he was leaving Liverpool Street for Rotterdam himself this evening.'

'Sit down, me boy. It's very kind of you to take this trouble. You will be an Englishman, I suppose now?'

'I am. But my sympathies are with Ireland as far as justice demands,' replied Harry with no small pomp and condescension; 'though I must say I don't approve of violence and dynamite, and shooting people and all that.'

'You think that is overdoing the justice part, I reckon? Well, we won't discuss that. You're an English gentleman, sir, that is very evident, and if they breed up a few more of your sort England will be no shucks of a country yet. Fancy that little cat giving us away! I couldn't have believed it! Well, she and Stevens will have to engage apartments in the basement of Purgatory some day pretty soon, I expect. Friend of yours at one time, wasn't she? Pat Vane said so.'

Then it suddenly flashed on Harry where he had seen the tall bullet-headed Irishman before, one

still summer day, in a smart varnished yacht's boat, with other persons—among them a pretty little lady in a white *beret*.

'Who do you mean?'

'Why, Mrs. Vane, Mary Carmen Shindler, whose life and money and parents we saved at the risk of our lives in a South American war! Great Scott, sir! Macgregor and Vane and I together, we fought our way through a town full of shooting, yelling, bayoneting rowdies to save that woman and her belongings from fire and loot and worse. We have believed in her and worshipped her like a religion for years, poor old Pat forst, and second to him, on a back seat, Mac and me. And she has sold the pass now. I wonder what she got for it? Well, it's over, and I must set to work and dig out now. Liverpool Street you said, young gentleman?'

'Er—yes.'

'Excuse me, I did not catch your name?'

'My name's Long.'

'*What?*' said Doherty, sitting bolt upright at the little oval table of the dingy back parlour, with a sudden terror in his face.

'Long — Sir Henry Long. My father, you know, died rather mysteriously a month or two ago, so I've come in for the—er—thing, don't you know.'

Doherty suddenly dropped his head on his hands on the table, and muttered:

'God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon me a sinner!'

'What's the matter, Mr. Barry?' said Harry Long.

Doherty stood up and said:

'Matter! I'm not Mr. Barry! I'm Mike

Doherty, and you, *you* of all people in the wide world, come here to save me from capture! You're ignorant of what you're doing. It's a fraud on you. I won't be saved at all! I'll stay here. Go and whistle for a peeler.'

'Are you mad?' said Harry rather tremulously.

'No; I wish I was. My boy, my poor clever lad, I murdered—— I didn't mean to kill him, only to stop him from impeding my escape, that I will swear in the presence of the blessed Sacrament.'

Harry trembled all over, and there was silence for some time, for he understood at last. After awhile he said:

'Mr. Doherty, I understand. There is no pretence that I am ignorant of what I am doing now.'

'You will do what you like; I will make no resistance.'

'Then, I say, go while the door is open!'

And Harry stood still and quiet, and upright, looking and behaving like what he was, a fine English gentleman, fit to be the son of his father.

Doherty bent his head and twisted a chair about with his hands. At last he said:

'I can't speak at all.' Then, after another pause, he said: 'The words are not made for the thoughts that I'm thinking.'

Harry quietly took up his hat and stick and gloves and walked out of the house.

In the street outside, a neatly-dressed shortish man with a waxed black moustache addressed him civilly:

'Sir Henry Long, I think?'

Harry recognised another of the occupants of that yacht's boat, and replied wearily:

'Yes.'

'Did you find Mike Doherty at home?'

Harry, assuming this person to be 'another of these blessed plotters,' and never dreaming that he had been carefully followed from the Prince's, replied:

'Oh yes! he's at home.'

Stevens, assuming something not far from the truth about Harry's connection with the whole matter, simply smiled, and said:

'It's a *little* imprudent of a person of your position to be acquainted with people of this sort, isn't it?'

'That's my business,' said Harry. 'Good-day.' And as he walked down Albany Street, hardly knowing or caring for the moment where he was going, the thought came to him, 'I know now, on absolutely convincing evidence, that there's no

shadow of this business hanging over poor Eva. That's something.'

Later in the afternoon Mike Doherty came out of his lodging with a bag and went (now, thanks to Stevens, carefully watched by two men) to Dr. Pohlmann's dwelling in Montfort Place, Kennington Road. While he was there, one of the men stayed and watched, while the other (who happened to be Inspector Keogh) went and fetched a couple more plain-clothes constables. Then they knocked at the door of the house, and directly the German landlord opened the door, Inspector Keogh put his foot between it and the jamb and shouldered his way in, followed by the two men. The other remained in the street, while a constable in uniform had been already despatched to watch the back of the house.

'Now,' said Inspector Keogh, 'we'll bottle the lot nicely.'

And they went first into the ground-floor room, where little Pohlmann was kneeling in his shirt-sleeves over a box, which he was hurriedly emptying of its contents, which were, as it happened, ingredients and apparatus for the manufacture of a certain highly propellent explosive, which is composed of certain proportions, which need not be named, of ammonium nitrate and di-nitro-benzol, melted together at a certain temperature, and mixed with another cheap and simple substance, which need not be mentioned. The two constables seized Pohlmann at once. Doherty stood by with one hand in his pocket, and a revolver in the other.

'It's not worth while shooting, Captain Doherty,' said Inspector Keogh; 'there's enough of us here to exhaust all your five barrels, and then put you away all the same, so you needn't add to the charges against you.'

'Guess you're right, Inspector Keogh. I suppose you're only doing your duty by the country that keeps you, and I am doing my duty by mine, in my way. Well, good-bye, me little Dutchman! God save Ireland!'

And before they knew what he was at, Doherty put his pistol firmly to his own temple and blew his brains out, and there lay on the floor of the poor lodging in Montfort Place the body of a brave if misguided man, another sacrifice to an ideal some still hope to make real, perhaps in better ways and with happier results.

There remains not much to be said. Some time afterwards a male and a female passenger took ship to a distant colony, whose passages and a certain sum of money down were paid them by the Government, under the name of Mr. and Mrs. Robertson.

Some ten days out they were found dead in their cabins, killed by an unknown hand. They were subsequently found to be Edmund Stevens and she who had been Mrs. Vane.

Mr. Shaw still takes walks with Bessie Long, and it is expected by some people that they will walk together for many years. Starmouth society is still quite feverish with the scandal of Sir Henry Long's marriage to a young person not in his own station in life, and nothing but the fact that he is a rich man, a landlord, a lord of the manor, and a person who publicly states that he doesn't care a twopenny curse what they think, say, or do, reconciles them to the notion of 'calling.' Still, they do call, and discuss indignantly over tea-tables afterwards how expensive her dresses are, the Starmouth ideals and codes being mostly, like those of many other censorious com-

munities, 'on a cotton foundation.' But Harry has become a strong Unionist.

Poor old Pat Vane has become very much broken up. The 'selling the pass' broke his heart. Shaw and Harry Long go to see him sometimes; and he has been greatly taken to by a very small lady called Long, who appeared in the course of time and nature, and is now between three and four years old.

General Macgregor and his faithful henchman Lee were last heard of somewhere in Chile, where a 'desturrbance' has been proceeding.

THE END.

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